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2dartist.
100

Issue 100 | April 2014

3dtotal.com

100 top industry tips

The world's top digital artists reveal tricks, techniques and inspiration to help improve your digital painting skills

Design new world concepts

Discover industry techniques for painting and presenting environment concepts in Photoshop

SPEED PAINTING WITH SILHOUETTES

Victor Mosquera demonstrates how to use silhouettes to speed up your painting process

Master the art of **caricature creation**

Create a cover with
a narrative

Wanchana Intrasombat (Vic) illustrates and documents the creation of this month's captivating cover

+plus

- 10 of the best digital images
- **Experiment with brushes**
- Sketching fantasy
- **100 covers**
- and much more!

Editor's Letter

JESS SERJENT-TIPPING
Deputy Editor

Welcome to the 100th issue of *2dartist* magazine!

We feel lucky to have been able to put the spotlight on so many talented artists over the issues, and to celebrate we have asked some of our favorite artists to share their digital art techniques and invaluable industry top tips. And as ever we have the usual fun you get with every issue, as well as a step-by-step tutorial on how to create the cover by Wanachana Intrasombat.

As a big thank you for picking up this issue (or any issue) and standing by us for all 100, head over to page 65 for freebies and competitions.

I hope we inspire you to get creating art as much as we did at the very beginning. Enjoy!

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Contributors

STEAMBOT STUDIOS
Steambot Studios is a Canadian visual development studio creating world class visual content for international clients in the entertainment industry. They also produce their own content.

SABIN BOYKINOV
Sabin Boykinov was born in Rousse, Bulgaria. He currently works as a Lead Concept Artist in Haemimont Games studio in Sofia and makes freelance illustrations for a variety of projects.

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Wanchana Intrasombat (Vic) is a 2D digital artist and co-founder of Studio Kun. He has worked as a concept artist, character designer and illustrator base in Bangkok, Thailand.

MARKUS LOVADINA (MALO)
Markus Lovadina (malo) is a Senior Concept Artist at Rocksteady Studios Ltd, as well as a freelance Concept Artist/Illustrator. He has also worked on movie projects and a variety of book covers too.

COSMIN PODAR
Cosmin Podar is currently employed as a full-time lead concept artist. In his spare time, he likes to create caricatures and take on other concept-related freelance jobs.

VICTOR MOSQUERA
Victor Mosquera is a Colombian concept artist living in Toronto, Canada and currently working at Ubisoft Toronto. His previous clients include companies such as Volta, Tor.com and One pixel Brush.

FERDINAND DUMAGO LADERA
Ferdinand Dumago Ladera is a concept artist originally from the Philippines. After studying Fine Art, Ferdinand now works at Ladyluck Digital Media as a concept artist specializing in fantasy and sci-fi.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SUBMIT TO 2DARTIST?
We are always looking for tutorial artists, gallery submissions, potential interviewees, writers and more. For more information, please send a link to your work to: **jess@3dtotal.com**.

Your Magazine.
Get the most out of it!

If you're having problems viewing the double-page spreads that we feature within this magazine, then follow this handy little guide on how to set up your PDF reader!

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For optimum viewing of the magazine, it is recommended that you have the latest version of Adobe Acrobat Reader installed. You can download it for free here: **DOWNLOAD**

To view the many double-page spreads featured in 2dartist magazine, you can set the reader to display "two-up", which will show double-page spreads as one large landscape image:

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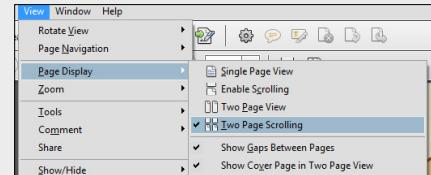
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In the Contents pages, we have direct links to all articles within the magazine. If a certain article catches your eye, simply click (or tap on handheld devices) on the page number within the Contents, and you will be taken straight to that article.

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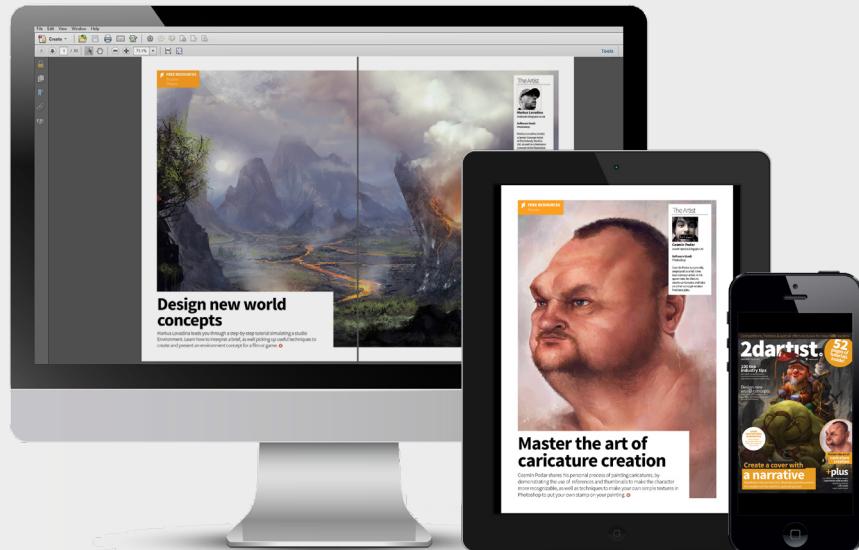
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Life at a
Visual development studio

With a team of top industry artists, Steambot Studios creates outstanding visuals for the entertainmentsindustries and we had the chance to take a glimpse at what life is like at their visual development studio ▶

The Montreal based creative studio, was founded by Sebastien Larroude, Joel Dos Reis Viegas and Nicolas Ferrand, a group of concept artists working in the entertainment industry mainly on film and video game. With the same visions and passion they have gone on to deliver topnotch visual content to clients spanning over the feature film, videogame and publishing industries, as well as creating in house content for their own films, games and book projects. We had the chance to peak behind the doors at Steambot to find out what makes them tick!

2dartist: How did you build your team of artists? And what does everyone's experience bring to the table?

Steambot Studios: The team was built by a natural selection. It's a very Charles Darwin process. We worked together for a long time and we are very complementary people, professionally and personally speaking. We come from different horizons like animation, compositing, architecture and design backgrounds.

2da: What makes you different from other studios?

SS: Each person is unique. Our vision is original. We are different because we make different choices and because we play with different cultures. Since the beginning, Steambot has a personal way of working in a team, our pipeline and workflow are ''maison'' and we are focusing on our Ips, side projects and R'n'D. We are not only an outsourcing studio, we produce our projects, like *URBANCE* actually in house.

2da: What is a typical day like in the studio?

SS: Every day is different, but every day is busy. ▶
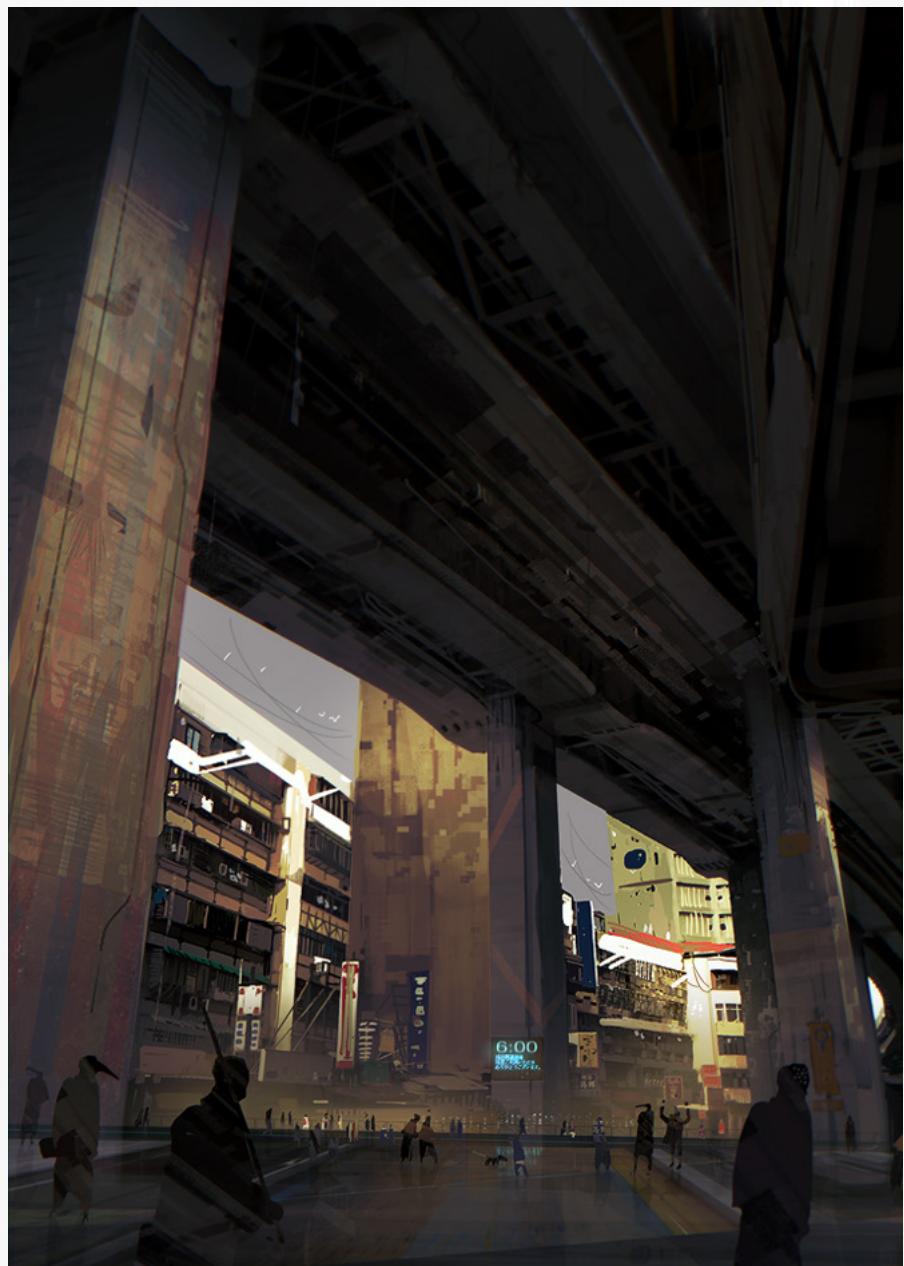
2da: Does the studio reflect any particular influences or inspirations?

SS: Our influences come from a lot of things rooted in our past and background. We are French from France, so our main influences come from Europe. However we bathed in the Japanese animation. Japanese culture is a big part on our inspirations. But it is an undeniable fact that we also had been permeated by American culture.

2da: Tell us about some of your favorite projects to date and how they have evolved?

SS: Our highlights are our IP's like *Exodyssey*, *Spark*, *Urbance* or *Cyan*. IP's mean difficulties. This is a long and hard way to follow. Perilous but rewarding.

2da: What has been your highlights as a studio and have you encountered any difficulties along the way?

SS: One of our big highlights was *Exodyssey* because it was our first project and every single step we went through together. Over pretty much 10 years, we meet an important step every year and difficulties adorn the path to the highlights. It's a normal process.

2da: Can you tell us about any of the projects you are currently working on?

SS: We can talk about *Urbance* and *Cyan* two projects we developed over several years and all, especially *Urbance* we want to move on an animated-TV-show. Be ready to hear more in the next month, but we are really happy to announce you that the Art book is actually in print. Trust me, this will be a big master piece and people we be surprised by the extreme quality and content of this book. ▶

Cyan is a comic book we developed on the side, which talks about the story of Atasi the heroine and main character we follow through a dark fantasy story taking place in the 80's in North America. Actually we are polishing chapter one now.

2da: Finally, what can we expect to see form Steambot Studios in the future?

SS: More film and game projects and pretty soon a new art book. For the rest we hope to develop *Urbance* the best we can. Our objective is the animated TV-show. ●

2dartist: Tell us a little bit about yourself: Who are you, what do you do, and where are you located?

Nicolas Ferrand: I'm working at Steambot Studios as an Art director / R&D , living in Montreal.

2da: Tell us the story behind your artwork: What brought you into the digital art world and what software do you use?

NF: I started as a 3D level artist for years then I chose to go back to my fine art roots , and to develop my ideas as a concept artist in the industry.

2da: How did you learn to paint digitally?

NF: I remember ocp art studio on amstrad cpc, we had to paint with the joystick pixel by pixel, then I spent a lot of time creating skins and maps textures for Quake and doom with the mouse on paintshop pro , and now I feel pretty comfortable with my Wacom in Photoshop! ▶
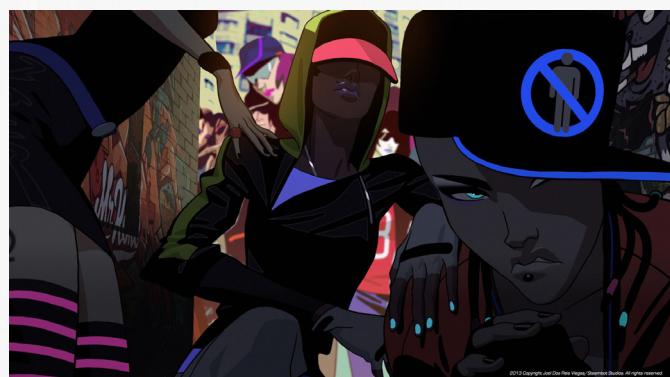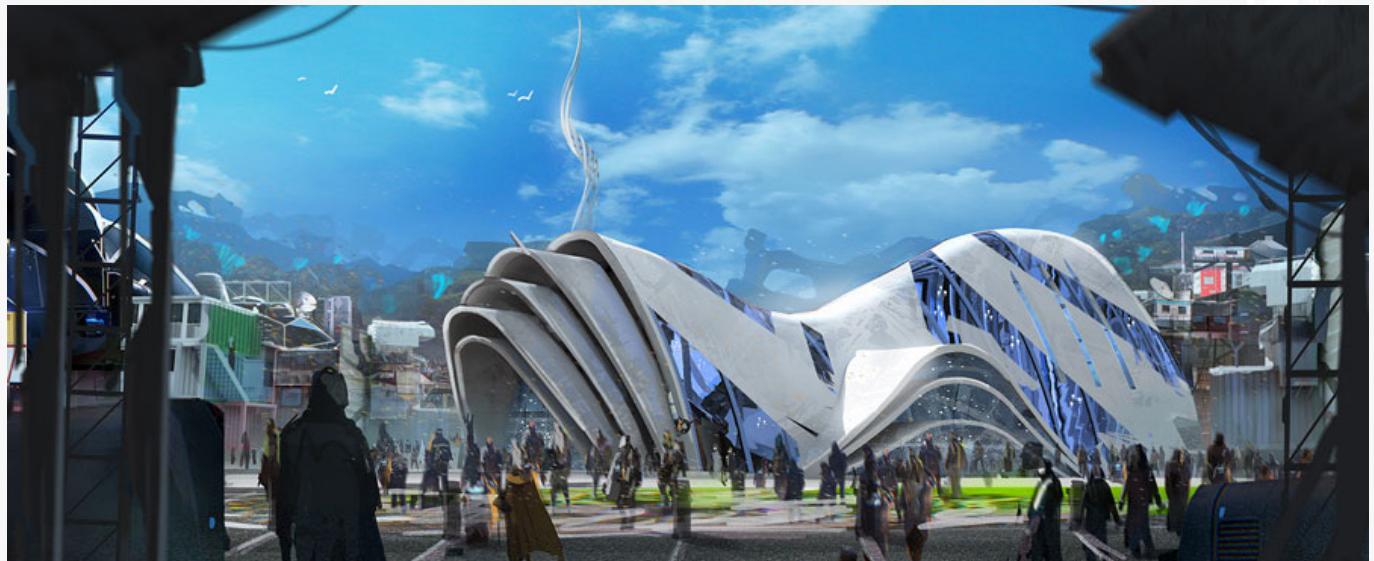
2da: How do you keep your portfolio up-to-date? Any tips?

NF: I am trying to be constant and to post a picture every two weeks, sometimes it's a speed painting, sometimes a more finished picture. Always try to have fun, explore new possibilities and techniques, try to take some risks and push your ideas further!

2da: Who are your favorite artists, traditional or digital, and can you explain why?

NF: Nicolas Bouvier, because he's a good friend and also one of the digital pioneers who showed us the possibilities of the digital world, for the traditional part, there are too many artists I like, but just to say some names: Gustav klimt, Jerome Bosch, Van gogh, Picasso, J.M.V turner, Giger, Egon Schiele etc.

2da: What software would you like to learn in the future to expand your portfolio and skill set, and why?

NF: I am trying to be better with Mudbox, to create organic stuff, and also because I want to improve my (digital) sculpting skills. ●

2dartist: Tell us a little bit about yourself: Who are you, what do you do, and where are you located?

Sebastien Larroude: I'm working at STEAMBOT STUDIOS as an Art director / concept artist and owner , living in Montreal.

2da: Tell us the story behind your artwork: What brought you into the digital art world and what software do you use?

SL: I started as a 3D animator and compositor artist for years then I chose to go back to my fine art roots.

2da: How did you learn to paint digitally?

SL: I learned to paint digitally year by year with really important people to me, like Sparth, Bruno Gentille (aka Hydropix), Nicolas Ferrand (aka Viag), Joel Dos Reis Viegas (Aka Feerik) and others great people I met over the years.

2da: How do you keep your portfolio up-to-date? Any tips?

SL: I am like the military. I work every day, I am constant in what I am doing. I do a lot of sport activities like climbing, running and I play music. These side activities are really important and give me the possibility to stay creative and help me a lot to focus on what I am doing. I couldn't live without. A tip: Be disciplined, don't do too much and enjoy.
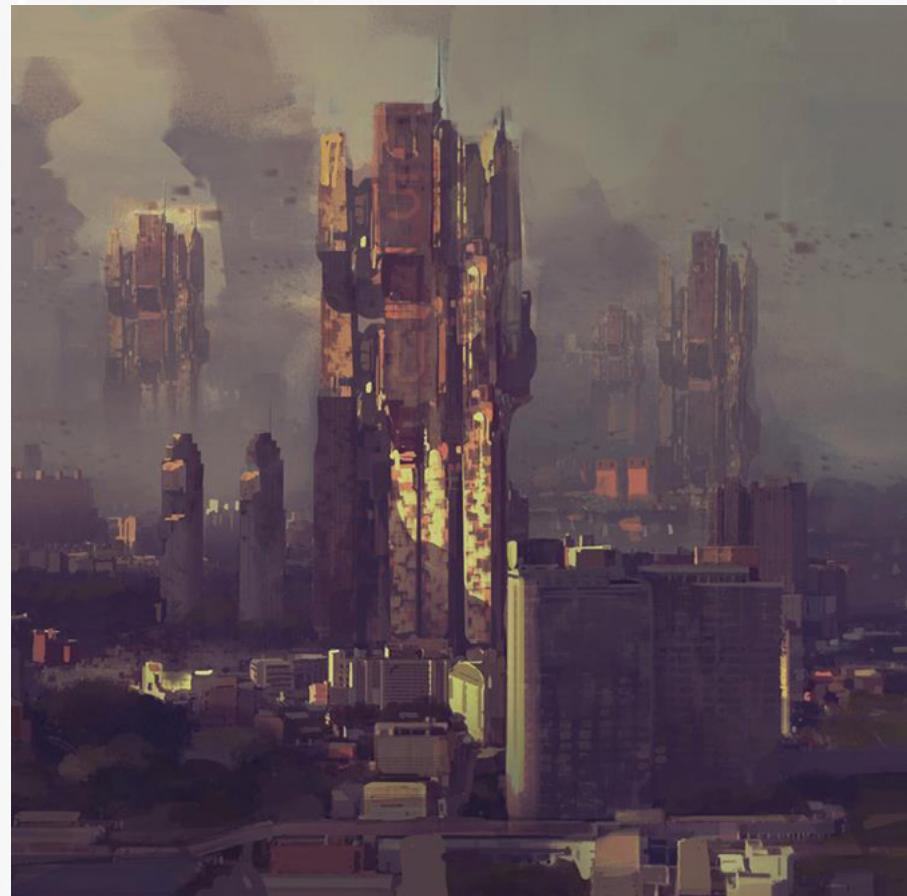
2da: Who are your favorite artists, traditional or digital, and can you explain why?

SL: I have a lot. Too many artist are everywhere, how to choose? However I am more inspired by musicians, dancers, sports persons etc. than digital painters. I love creative people, whatever painters or scientists.

2da: What software would you like to learn in the future to expand your portfolio and skill set, and why?

SL: I am trying everything anytime. But 2D animation seduces me a lot, even the basics. ●

Learn to paint
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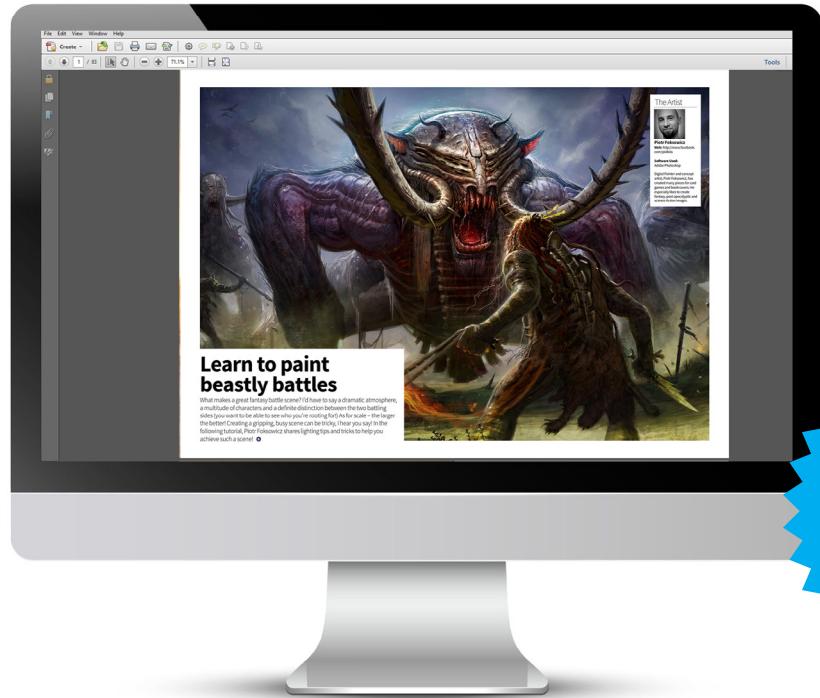
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"A great source of inspiration and tips on how to improve your skills and speed up your painting process. Besides very detailed step-by-step tutorials, 2dartist magazine will also ensure there are a large variety of topics covered as well."

- Blaz Porenta, illustrator

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SABIN BOYKINOV
Sketchbook

Lead Concept Artist, Sabin Boykinov finds inspiration in everything, from movies and games, to music or a good book, and is never without his sketchbook to record it all down in. Immerse yourself in those pages of his fantasy filled sketchbook!

The Artist

Sabin Boykinov
sabinart.blogspot.com

Sabin Boykinov was born in Rousse, Bulgaria. He currently works as a Lead Concept Artist in Haemimont Games studio in Sofia and makes freelance illustrations for a variety of projects like Fantasy Flight Games card games, *The Lord of the Rings* and *Game of Thrones*.

Sabin Boykinov reveals the inner pages of his sketchbook...

For me sketching is the best way to record ideas and develop my drawing skills. Drawing is also a way for me to relax, away from the digital work I create with the rest of my time.

Inspiration and ideas

My inspiration comes from almost everything – a great book, movie, mountain hiking or song title. Music is a powerful source of inspiration for me. Playing games is another great source of visual research and professional development. It is so interesting to see how my favorite concept art is transferred into the actual game.

Materials

I don't really have a specific set of favorite materials because I like to experiment with everything I find in the local supplies shop. Mostly I use mechanical pencils like HB, B2 B4 with no specific brand.

Sketching techniques

My technique is really simple. I start with the overall composition idea, then add forms and shadow balance. Finally, I add some details.

Sabin's studio

⚡ PRO TIP

Interests

Try to have many diverse personal interests – don't focus on painting and drawing alone. Read a lot of books, research world-famous designers and architects, and meet different kinds of people.

Be like a child. Keep your fascination with nature alive, and store an extensive visual library in your mind.

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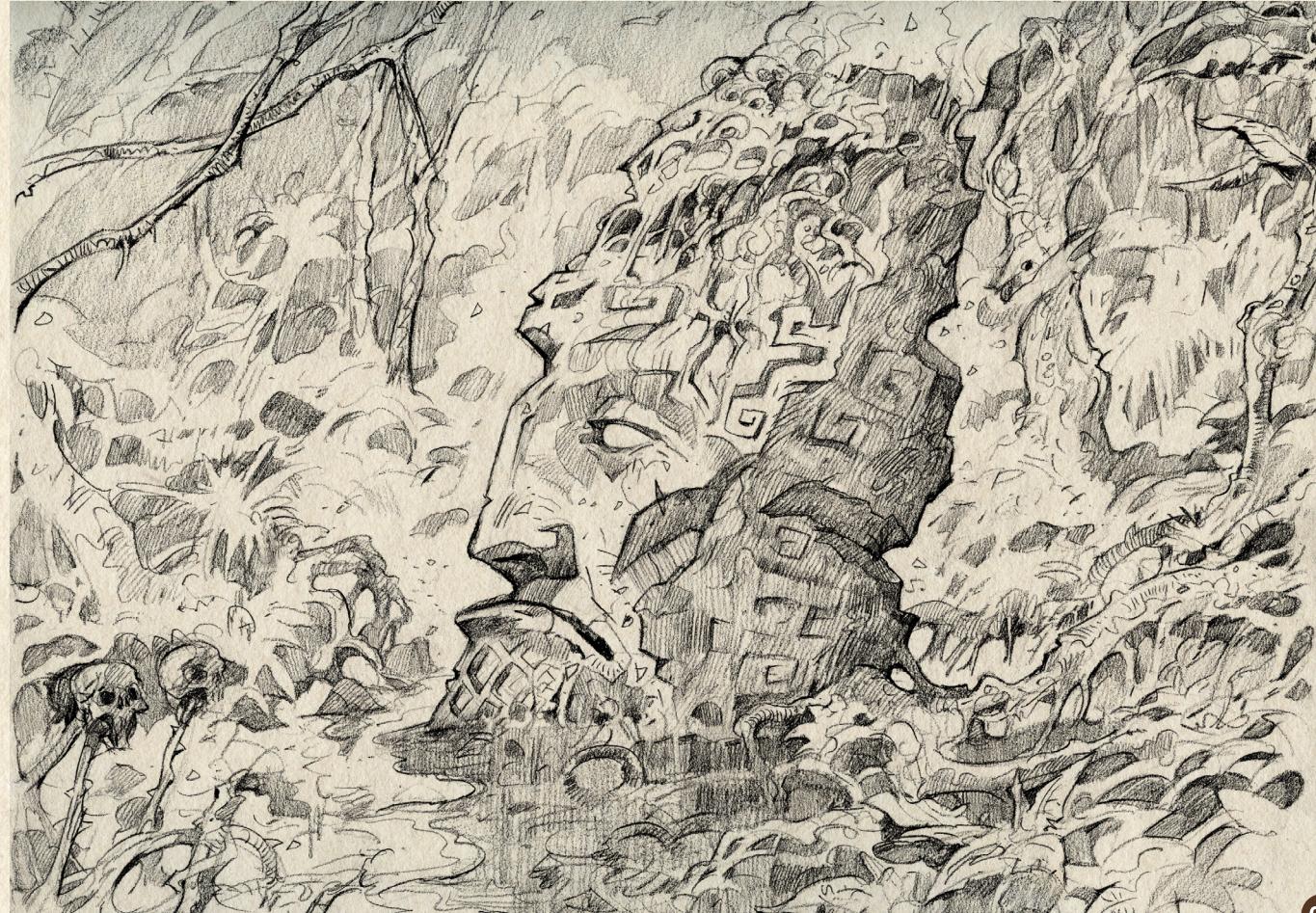
01 Sketch inspired by South American Indian culture

02 Character research of ancient Aztec warriors

03 Character research inspired by the book of Roger Zelazny: *Donnerjack*

04 Personal idea inspired by medieval mystic people who search for the answers of universal creation

04

Sketching on the beach of Akti Oneirou, Greece

05

Concept sketch for Paul Richards' book project: *Substrata*
www.autodestruct.com/substrata

A sketch inspired by Mayan legends
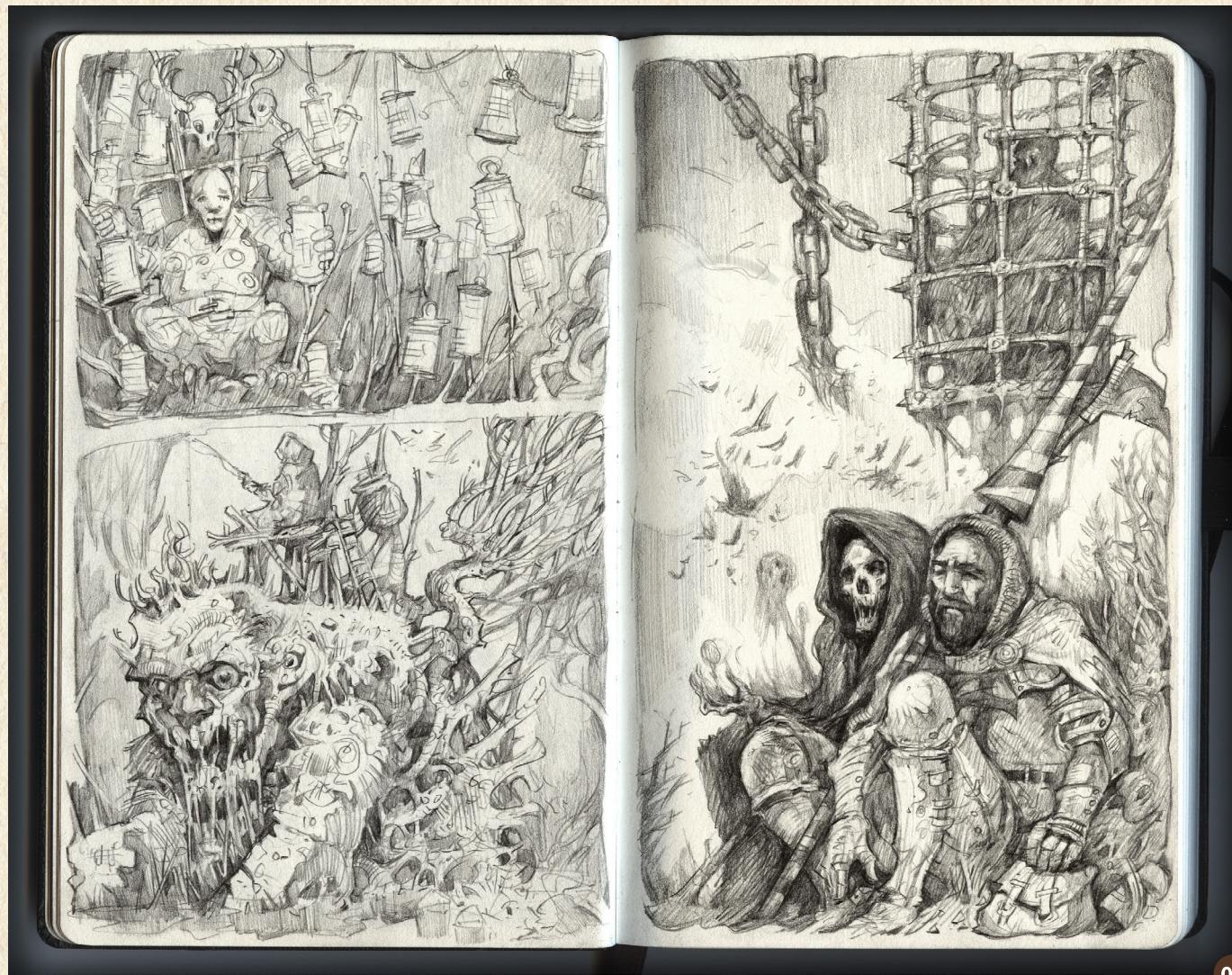
07

⚡ PRO TIP

Sketchbook

Always carry a small sketchbook in your bag – you never know when a good idea will come to you.

07 Compositions inspired by fairytales from my childhood

08 This is inspired by the heavy metal songs of *Manowar* – I am really a big fan of the band

09 A kind of horror story

08

10 Medieval sketch inspired by the *Game of Thrones* series

11 This is a story about a giant who holds some secret knowledge on his island
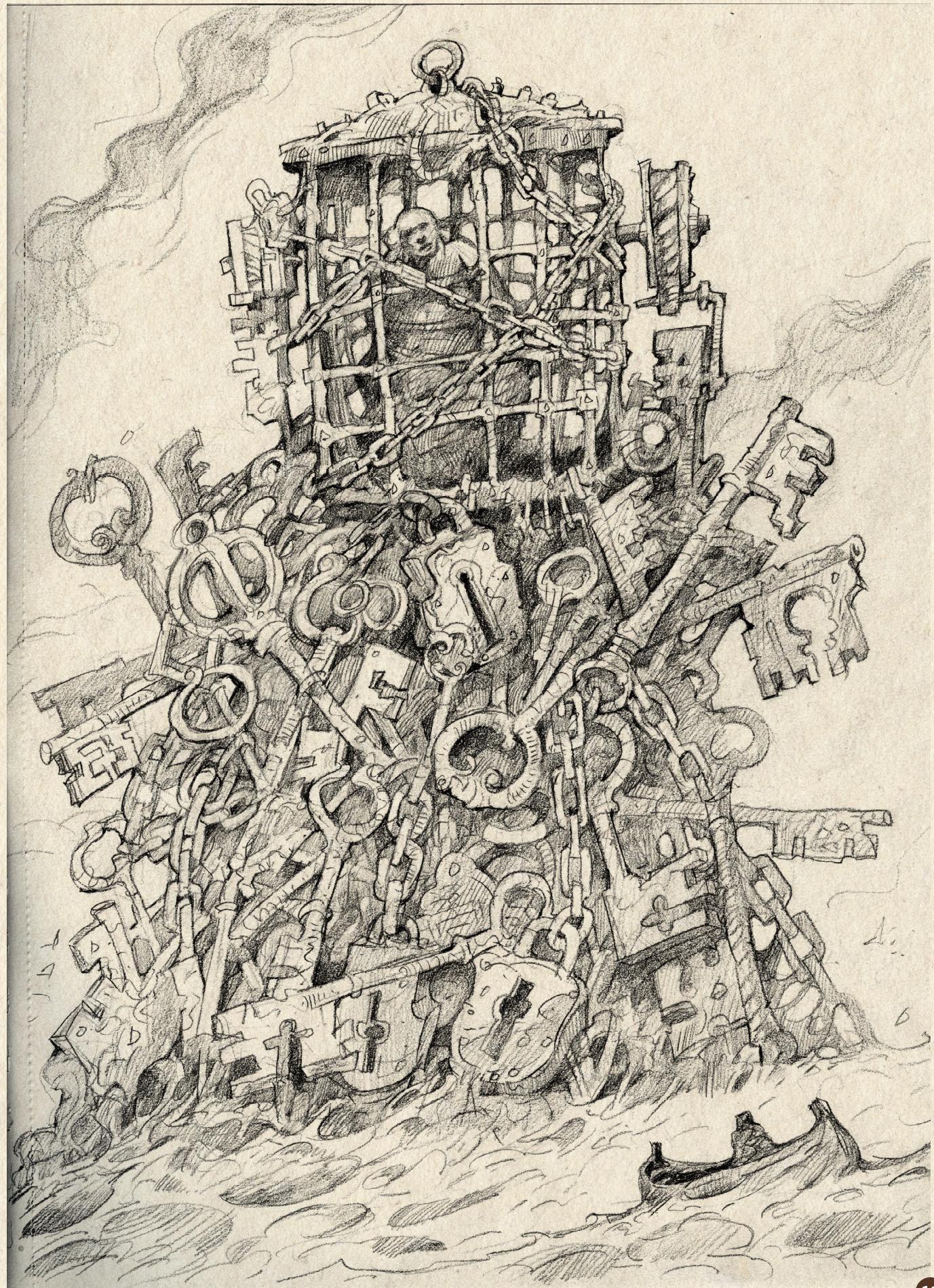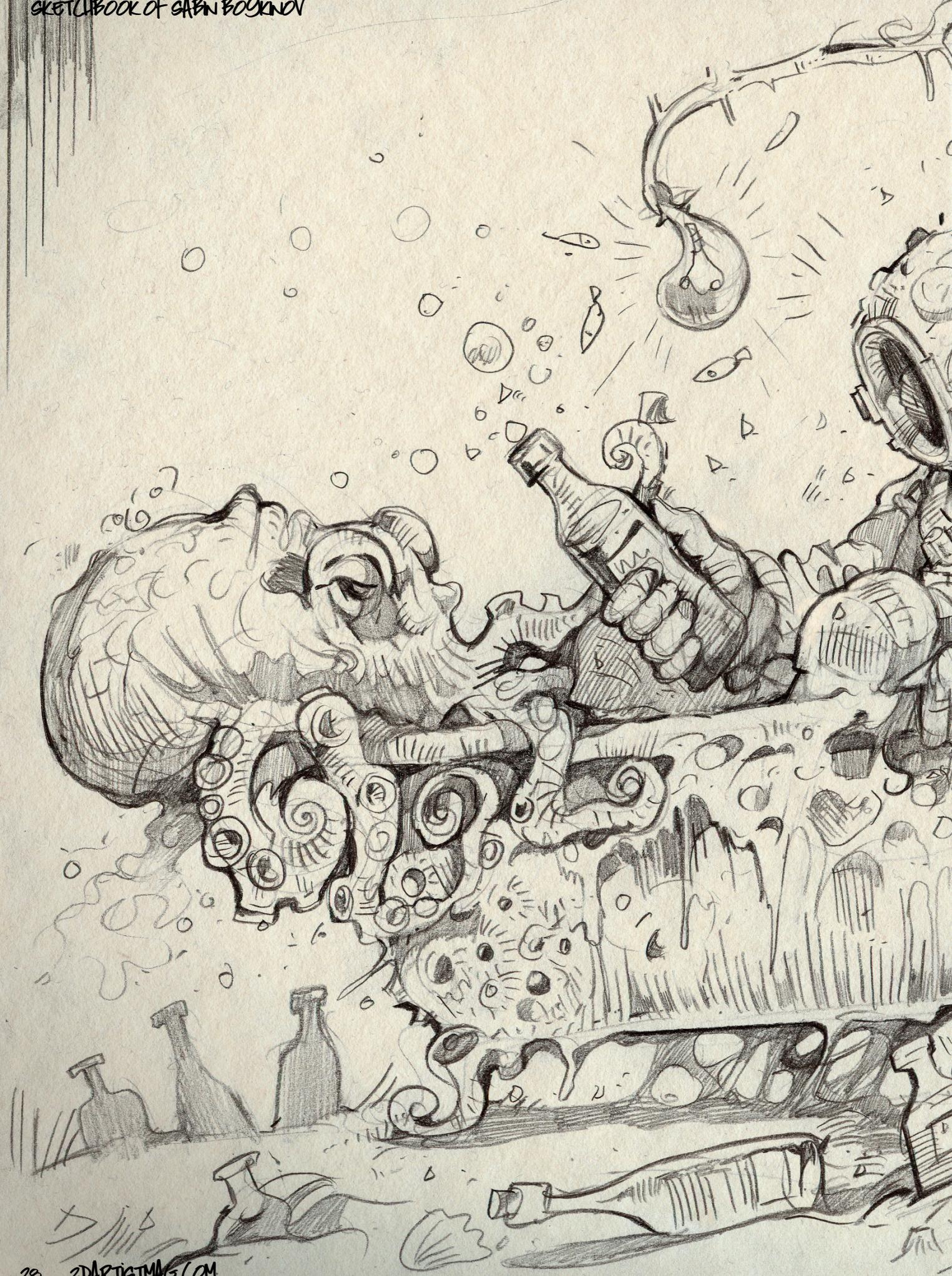
Work made for fun – I'm a big
fan of vintage diving suits

12

SABIN 2012 20
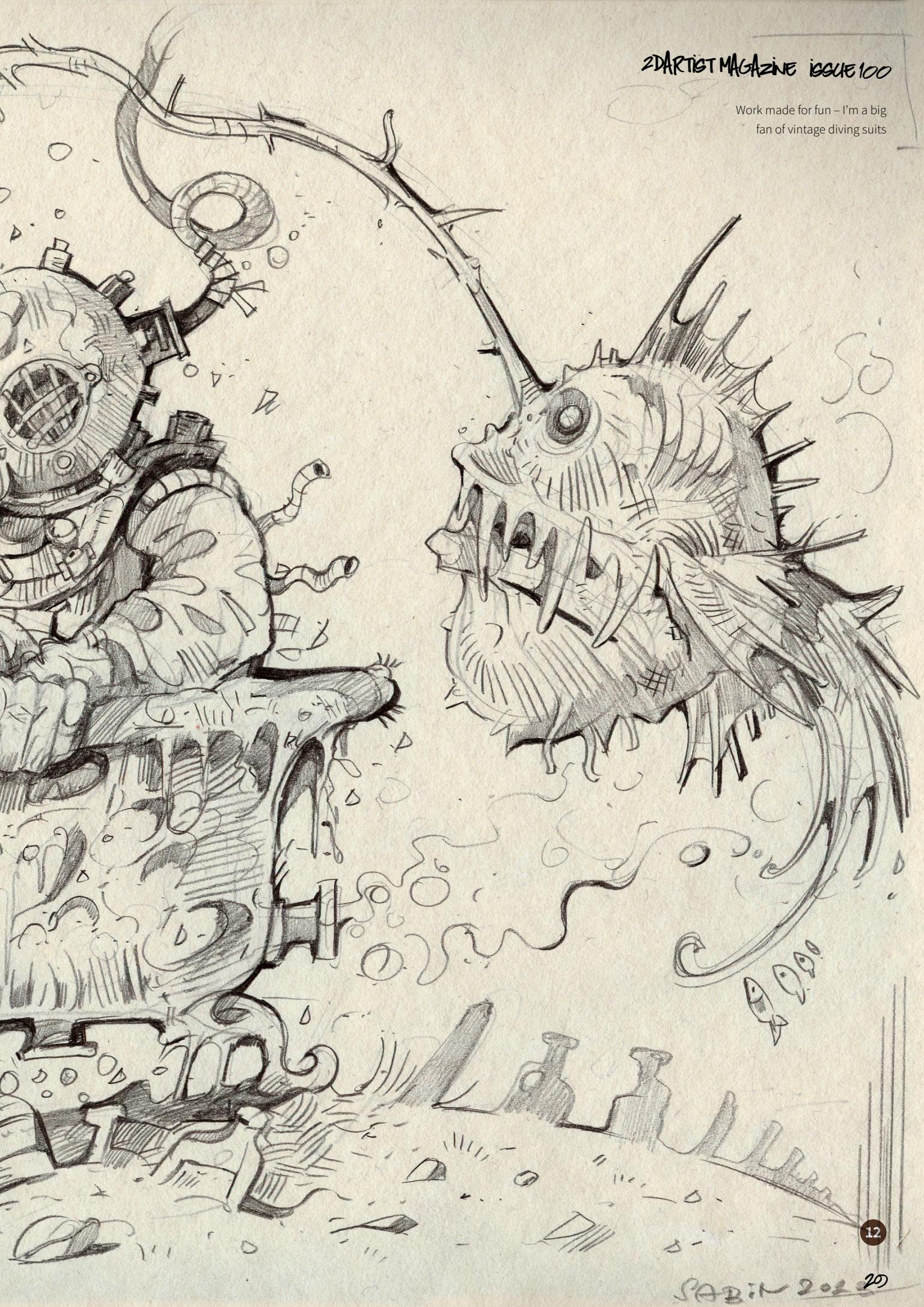
2dartist

Would you like to see your sketches featured in 2dartist magazine?

We're always on the lookout for talented artists and their artwork to adorn the pages of our magazine. If you think you have what it takes, get in touch!

To submit, simply email Jess at **jess@3dtotal.com** with a selection of your images or a link to your portfolio online, plus a little information about you.

We look forward to hearing from you!
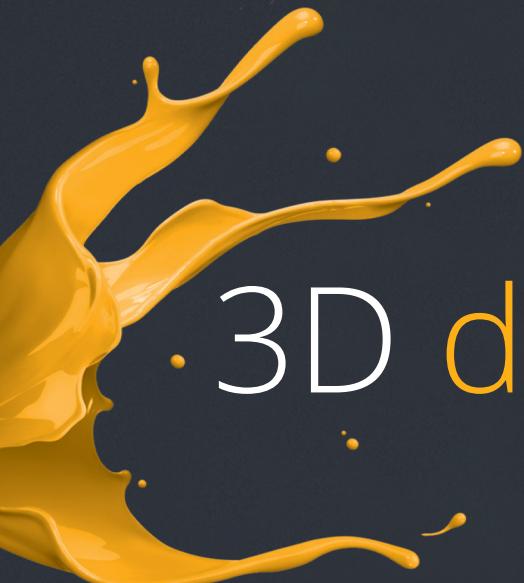
image © Wesley Burt

100
top industry tips

The world's top digital painters reveal invaluable industry theories, techniques and inspiration to help you hone your digital painting skills and improve as an artist… ▶

Words by Poz Watson

Bjorn Hurri
Lead artist, Opus Artz
bjornhurri.com

Brett Bean
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Ioan Dumitrescu
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Jeremy Love
Concept artist & illustrator
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Jonas De Ro
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Raphael Lacoste
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Wesley Burt
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Xavier Etchepare
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xetchepare.cgsociety.org

• Creating concepts

Ideas can't be forced, but you do have to learn to pin them down, shape then, tame them...

Sometimes as an artist you feel you haven't got an original thought in your head, and other times you can barely reach for the paper fast enough. But perhaps what separates the good artist from the great artist is their ability to shape that raw idea into a workable concept and then a final polished piece. Too often, fresh ideas get lost in translation and execution, so you have to learn to trust your own instincts.

01 **Capture the essence:** "It all starts at the idea phase. The initial spark comes to mind and I will start to pursue it using gesture, then as the picture is evolving I will try to capture it more and more." **Bjorn Hurri**

02 **Trace layers:** "I use the powers of the layers by roughly sketching on a layer where I focus purely on character and pose, and then I lower the opacity of that layer and create a new layer on top so I can trace my own sketch for a much cleaner look." **Bjorn Hurri**

**03** **Keep avenues open:** "I try to create at least three options. I sketch them out on separate layers first, but at some point I extend the canvas so all the sketches sit next to each other and continue to evolve the ideas by making sure they are sitting together stylistically but separated by ideas." **Bjorn Hurri**

04 **Keep your ideas pure:** "An idea is abstract; it exists somewhere in your head and you have to make it real. So don't work with references at the beginning, simply working with an objective is enough." **Xavier Etchepare**

● When you're doing character work, pose and gesture is one of the first things that might come as you work out your concept © Brett Bean

● When you're working on personal projects, you need to develop an inner voice that you can trust to know when an image direction is right © Brett Bean
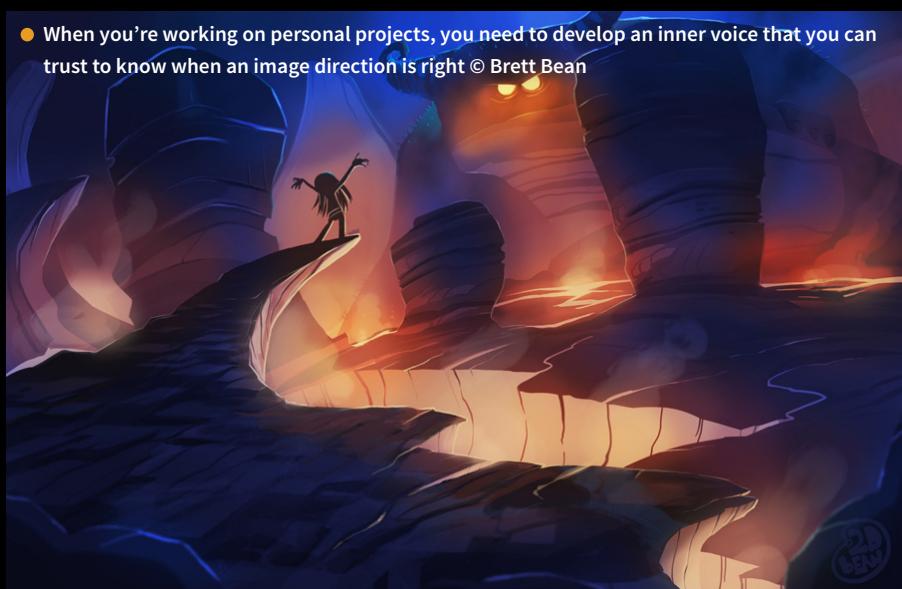
05 **Avoid composition chaos:** "I always draw a rough base, and then with a Lasso selection, I fill it with color and different brushstrokes. This makes the process quicker and is more likely to create those 'happy accidents'. It's important to test out a variety of different compositions first, so it's better to have an efficient process to play with and find a good one quickly." **Xavier Etchepare**
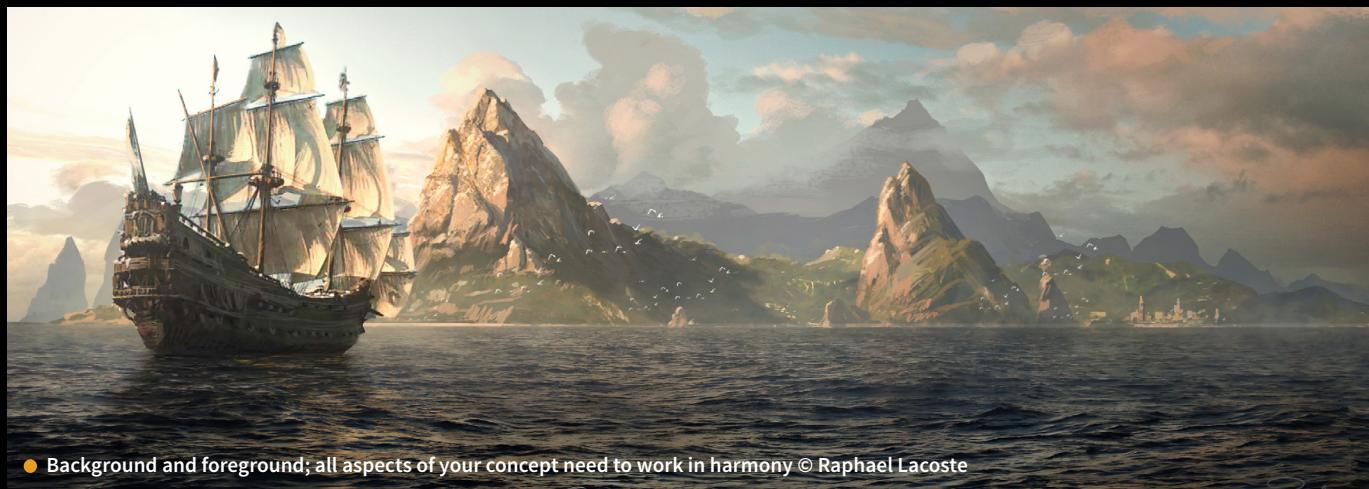
● Background and foreground; all aspects of your concept need to work in harmony © Raphael Lacoste

● **Draw straight into Photoshop, or not, depending on what feels right for the image**
© Wesley Burt

● **Being open to changes is important as you hone your concepts**
© Wesley Burt

06 **Keep it simple:** "Usually an idea can come from a picture I have in my mind, or sometimes after reading a book, watching a movie or just something that is in my mind and that needs to be 'materialized'. For me, the first step is to draw something on paper and get the very simple first sketch and composition down. I love to use Uniball bold 207 pens on any small piece of paper." **Raphael Lacoste**

07 **Break the concept down:** "I take a picture of a simple thumbnail and import it in Photoshop. Then I fix the size of my canvas, crop the ideal composition and start to divide my painting in different layers. I create groups for each part from the background, sky, and clouds, to mid-ground, and the foreground elements." **Raphael Lacoste**

08 **Using references:** "For pretty much any sort of concept job or illustration job I start out by researching and compiling a folder of references relevant to the job. I then create rough sketches and/or thumbnails to figure out the idea or direction I want to go." **Wesley Burt**

09 **Just dive in:** "I often start sketching right in Photoshop. I love working traditionally too, but generally save that for my own personal work and keep the digital stuff exclusive for working." **Wesley Burt**

10 **Strike a pose (or two):** "I usually work out an idea through a number of thumbnails or, if it's a character job, I will do an assortment of different line art or grayscale options exploring the ways the character could be approached visually." **Wesley Burt**

11 **Use your downtime:** "Your thought process is key. I usually think of ideas as I do Random things like dishes, laundry, or play volleyball. Only when I have a story segment or a character design idea do I start thinking about composition or shapes that reflect it. If I need research, that's when it happens. If not I'll start drawing on paper or take a pencil brush in Photoshop and start to scheme. While I am

drawing I'm usually thinking of the next stages like tones and colors." **Brett Bean**

12 **Offer options…** "If it's for a client, I make many little thumbnails and ideas for them to choose from. Since it's hard to know what they want right off the bat I make lots of choices so we can start a dialogue. If I like a shape or design, I'll clone it in Photoshop and keep messing to get variations on that theme. It's a quick and easy way to show lots of options for the director." **Brett Bean**

13 **…or make confident choices:** "If it's for my own project I will erase and redo the image until I find the design. Since I am the 'director' I just keep moving stuff until my inner self says; 'OK, yeah, that's it, move on now'." **Brett Bean**

14 **Get inspiration where necessary:** "I like to start with rough shapes and try to get as many of my own ideas and interpretations of the brief onto the page before looking at any references. Once I hit a wall, I'll look at all sorts of references to help spark new ideas and to make my initial thumbnails more convincing." **Jeremy Love**

15 **Don't over-think it:** "I stay loose and try to let my ideas flow without over-thinking. I sometimes use a low opacity black to do a very quick scribble then move straight onto the next one without stopping. As soon as an idea comes, I scribble it down then move on. Once I've done a page of scribbles I'll go back over and play around with them. I'll increase the Opacity on the black with each pass." **Jeremy Love**

16 **Don't be caught short:** "Most of my work begins in a sketchbook. The biggest piece of advice I could give is that you should *always* carry a sketchbook and a decent pen with you. You never know when you're going to see something that will prompt an idea for a painting." **Ian McQue**

17 **Don't get tied down:** "I scan my sketchbook work and use the line art as a basis for a value painting over the top on a layer set to Multiply. While following the line art I try not to be too constrained by it, and always be open to going off on a tangent if it will help the overall look of the image." **Ian McQue**

18 **Know what you're doing:** "Start planning your image after breaking down the brief received, ideas, or feelings you want to portray. Either it's a film-noir sci-fi city with highways and cars going down skyscrapers, or its two people walking in a park. So write a simple sentence and describe as effectively as possible what the final image will show to get a firm idea of your direction." **Ioan Dumitrescu**

19 **Broad strokes:** "The best way to plan out any illustration is from the bottom up. Start with the overall mood and composition. Big shapes and thumbnail viewing can help make your image read well at small sizes." **Jonas De Ro**

20 **Don't rest on your laurels:** "Remember, a lot of paintings look good in a rough stage, if the first step was successful. But for client work or other high-resolution requirements, most of the time will be spent detailing everything - and that's where the skill comes in." **Jonas De Ro**

Staying strong

Of course, if you're working on a professional piece, it's not only your own instincts you have to satisfy, but the ideas and working needs of the client. Generally speaking though, if an idea is strong and you're listening to the brief properly, you should be able to push towards a concept that both you and the client appreciate.

But be warned, the bulk of the hard work is to come, as you have to create that image and keep the original concept in mind at all times. Things might change in your image, but it's better to adapt your work to fit a better idea and move forward, than simply drift. ▶

• Painting techniques

Every artist has their own ways of approaching Photoshop painting. Our experts reveal some of their tricks

The most important thing to remember when you're painting in Photoshop is that it's not all that different to painting on a real canvas with a real brush. You still need to think about the composition, color, and texture, and choose and tweak your tools to achieve your desire effect. So don't get caught up in the whizz-bang power that Photoshop has, instead focus on the hard work and talent required to bring a great image to fruition.

● Ian McQue uses the Lasso tool in his work © Ian McQue

21 Try different techniques: "I try to vary my painting techniques now and then to teach myself new approaches. I'll hard-brush only where I 'carve' the forms without a sketch to guide me, and use Photobashing where painting and careful composing of photos go hand in hand. I also sometimes use line art first and then do washes of paint on top in order to build the painting up." **Bjorn Hurri**

22 Work on texture: "I think it is quite important to paint at least a suggestion of texture in your work because you can use that to your advantage. Controlling how different materials deal with the Specular one can significantly impact your final look." **Bjorn Hurri**

23 Elbow grease: "I tend to paint a lot from scratch, so when textures are involved it is usually handcrafted textures where I've tried to apply textures and separate or join areas using different techniques to achieve a specific look." **Bjorn Hurri**

24 Fast fade: "Using fade filters in the Edit menu is very handy!" **Bjorn Hurri**

25 Texture to highlight: "A random square shape on your image can be transformed into a beautiful rock with only some

scratches and rough shadows. Often textures are something I use in lighter spaces to highlight the material and its characteristics. When I work with photographs on videogames I always use the final lighting to break my textures because I don't want them everywhere, it's really noisy and you can lose sense of the image." **Xavier Etchepare**

26 Texture to differentiate: "I apply realistic textures on main elements and have more graphic ones on secondary elements." **Xavier Etchepare**

27 Texture to guide: "Texture can help move the viewer's eyes through a composition and also help keep their eyes glued to a certain area, depending on the focus you create." **Wes Burt**

28 Texture for realism: "Texturing is important if you want to achieve a realistic or plausible design and illustration, but is not essential if you simply want to create a mood and composition." **Raphael Lacoste**

29 Work from a photo: "I use a lot of different techniques, though recently most of my works are based on photos I have

taken or are painted completely from scratch. I also sometimes use 2D textures that I'll distort in Perspective to give more realism or detail to surfaces." **Raphael Lacoste**

30 Work from a 3D render: "Sometimes I will even go to 3D software and render a scene with a simple geometry and Global Illumination and use this as a base to work on. The use of 3D render is mainly for architecture or structural compositions though. When it comes to more natural or organic settings like a landscape, I use only 2D drawn and textured elements." **Raphael Lacoste**

31 Use color wisely: "I use colors that remind me of the 'point' of the piece or character. I'll usually think about using boisterous bright colors for happiness, or pastel colors for a childlike mentality, or muted tones for somber pieces. I use colors as metaphors and I ask myself very plainly, 'how do I want the audience to react to this?'" **Brett Bean**

32 Banish unnecessary brush work: I use brushes sparingly and I stick to basic Photoshop brushes for 90% of the piece. As for technique, I will either work from

● Texture is hugely important in Ian McQue's work © Ian McQue
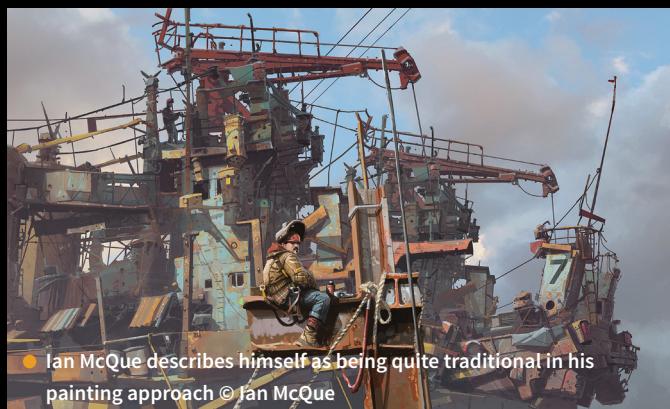
● Ian McQue describes himself as being quite traditional in his painting approach © Ian McQue

● Jonas De Ro admits that texture is very important. Reaction to light and texture are the main elements that make up any material, and everything you paint has a 'material' – yes, even clouds! © Jonas De Ro

> ## "Just like in film, if you're noticing the editing or the crescendo of the score, it takes you out of it. But if you just see what 'it' is, then well done"

● Custom brushes are great for painting with, but experience is also key © Jonas De Ro

light to darks (watercolor approach) or start with flat colors and then add tonal ranges. Each painting or client comes with a different need. I try to be open to handling a variety of situations." **Brett Bean**

33 Make it coherent: "If I do my job right, you won't notice any single element in the scene - not technique, not textures, not lighting, you'll just see a character or a design. If you see it as a whole entity, then I did it correctly. Just like in film, if you're noticing the editing or the crescendo of the score, it takes you out of it. But if you just see what 'it' is, then well done." **Brett Bean**

34 Under paint: "One painting technique I sometimes use is to 'under-paint' in grayscale to get the tone and contrast right, and then use a few selective color layers to add global colors. I then paint in more refined colors using a Multiply or Color layer. From there, it's easy to paint over in Normal mode as all the hard work is done." **Jeremy Love**

35 Dodge defects: "I like to use the Magic Wand tool with Contiguous turned off, to select areas of similar tone, copy (Ctrl+Shift+C) then paste (Ctrl+V) onto a new locked layer then play around with texture brushes and the Dodge tool. A good example would be sunlight on rooftops or the ocean. You'll find that using the Dodge tool with different brushes creates some great Specular effects, especially on metal." **Jeremy Love**

36 Select and perfect: "I use the Lasso tool a lot to create masked areas to paint into. I've made a hotkey for the Transform Selection which is great for warping selections around. I also use Inverse (Ctrl+Shift+I) to paint outside the mask. This works especially well for organic shapes such as plants." **Jeremy Love**

37 Bring the real world in: "I'm quite traditional in my approach, and always try to replicate the same sort of techniques I would use if I were using paint on canvas. I feel this is more honest than relying heavily on the shortcuts you can find in Photoshop." **Ian McQue**

38 Be hard-edged: "I use the Lasso tool a lot for creating hard edges, it's very important in describing interesting silhouettes." **Ian McQue**

39 Make it weathered… "Texture is hugely important in my work. I use the default oil pastel brush a great deal to create the rusted and weathered surfaces you'll see in my paintings." **Ian McQue**

40 …or create some weather: "Use the Noise filter for a range of effects. The most simple technique here is to add some noise to your image as you would get on a photo taken with a high ISO setting. Crush the contrast of the noise and you suddenly get snow particles. Put a Motion Blur on that and it becomes rain!" **Jonas De Ro**

Paint it out
This is the stage where it's easy to flag. You have that initial light bulb moment and the adrenaline that goes with it, and then you the creative buzz of exploring the avenues you could go down. But the painting is the work, the meat of the image as it were, and if it doesn't continue to look as good as it did in your mind's eye then it can be dispiriting. But keep going, or take a break, or try a different technique, or work on something else for a while – whatever you need to do to keep that inspiration flowing. ▶

• Custom brushes

Make your work your own, with custom brushes designed for the task at hand

Photoshop has a massive selection of brushes and various ways to tweak them to suit, but for some artists, and for some projects, there is nothing like a custom brush. These can be created and re-used by an artist as personal brushes, or they can be built for a specific part of a specific image. Our experts reveal how they make and use custom brushes in their own work.

41 Adding difference: "Using custom brushes is a great way to break up the monotony of a single brush, and they can also be useful for taking shortcuts in the creative process. It's something you have to be careful with though, too many and it will end up a mess." **Bjorn Hurri**

42 Do it yourself: "Sometimes I use parts of a photo to make a custom brush; sometimes I paint something with a specific texture or behavior in mind." **Bjorn Hurri**

43 Know what you want: "It's important to know what are you expecting graphically (which texture do you want to simulate?) before you create your brush, because you can effectively create a million different results. At the beginning, it can be fun to discover new effects but you may become completely lost in your process later on, so you have to fix objectives." **Xavier Etchepare**

44 Bring everything together: "In videogames you often work with photographs for your concepts, though they have many different resolutions and you will have to homogenize all areas of your image in the final step. Brushes are useful at this point because you can add a custom texture to make your render stronger and more personal. I don't use brushes to design something, only to reinforce the lighting and texturing." **Xavier Etchepare**

45 Custom cutouts: "With photographs I often deteriorate the image with a Cutout filter to reduce details – this way I can choose which ones I want on the final result. I also do something similar with custom brushes." **Xavier Etchepare**

46 Know when to say 'no': "I don't use a lot of custom brushes, as I am a bit more traditional in this area. The main brushes I use are a hard-angled brush to get sharp shapes and edges, and the simple large standard

● You can use all sorts of materials to create your own custom brushes © Xavier Etchepare
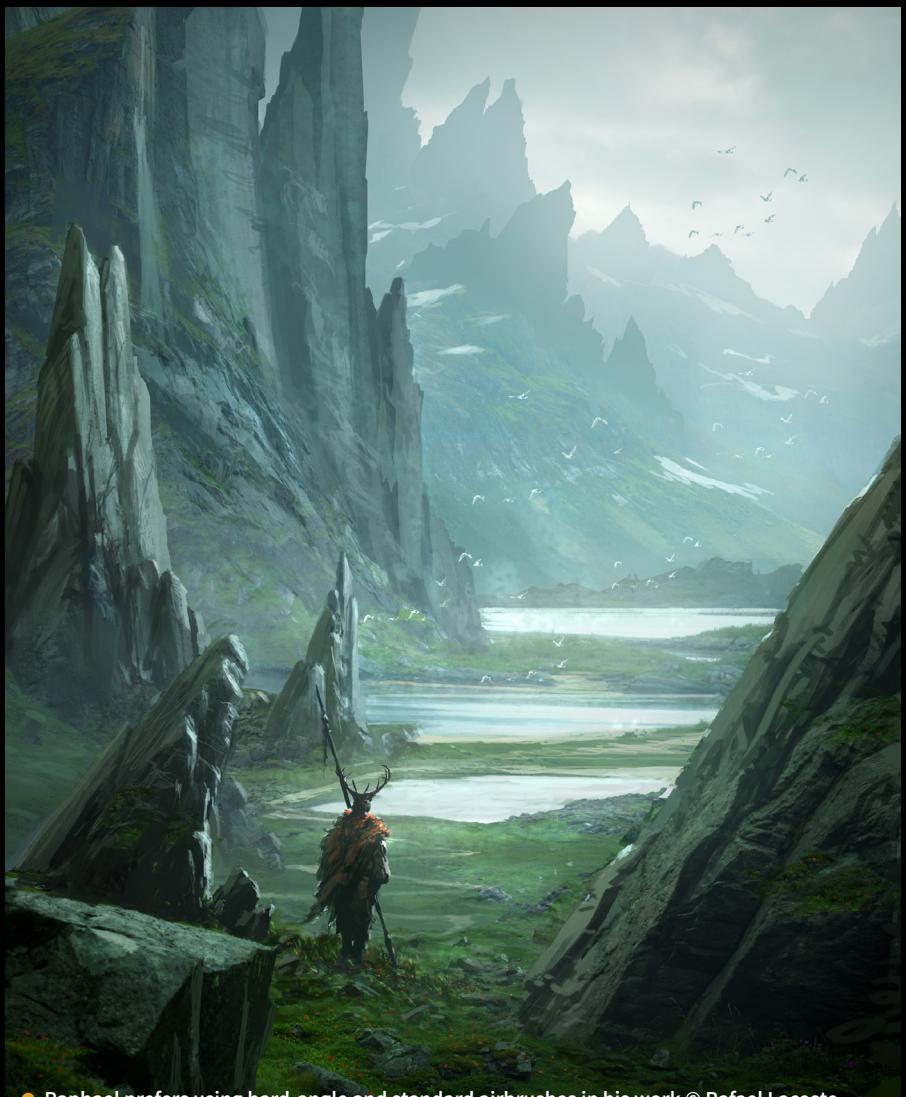
● Raphael prefers using hard-angle and standard airbrushes in his work © Rafael Lacoste

airbrush with a very low opacity to mix light with local colours and create atmospheric blending. Sometimes, to save time in specific designs, I will also use pattern brushes (like scaffoldings for a sci-fi theme or trees in a landscape) to create effects" **Raphael Lacoste**

47 Use what's available: "There are so many brush packs on the web that I mainly just go through and keep an assortment of brushes from other people. I'll make a specific brush if there is an effect I know I want to get." **Wesley Burt**

● An off-centre subject makes an image both realistic and interesting © Jeremy Love

> "Custom brushes are great for getting a painting started so there's already some texture on the page to paint over. Sometimes it helps me to get started if I'm having a bit of a block"

48 Play favourites: "I have several custom brushes that I prefer to use when working on sketches and thumbnails. These are rough, scratchy brushes that keep me from rendering too much early on and ensure I stay in the block-in phase. I also have a number of brushes that work well for things like fire, clouds, magical FX, brushed metal texturing, and many others." **Wesley Burt**

49 Texture tactics: "In order to create custom brushes for textures, I first make a clean empty layer. I will find a texture that conveys my design intentions like rocks, a pattern, cloth, or a sci-fi symbol. I will erase the edges so there are no hard edges, and then create a custom brush." **Brett Bean**

50 Silhouette solutions: "The other way I custom brushes is to create interesting silhouettes. I will make long rectangle shapes, or maybe a thin palette knife shape, or even a triangle. If you convert these to brushes and mess with direction, you can create some interesting and helpful accidents for exploring your designs." **Brett Bean**

51 Basic brush creation: "I start with a white 300x300pixel image, and paint my texture in grayscale. Then I'll move to Edit > Define Brush Preset, and name it. I experiment with the brush presets until I'm happy, then select all my brushes and save over my current set. I sometimes just duplicate and edit the brush presets of an existing brush which already has attributes that closely suit what I'm after." **Jeremy Love**

52 Organize your assets: "To save time when selecting brushes, I put the ones I use the most at the top of the brush selector. I group the brushes I tend to use for thumbnail development at the beginning and so on." **Jeremy Love**

53 Broad strokes: "I mainly create custom brushes for efficiency when I'm faced with painting a lot of the same thing, like trees or grass, patterns and so on." **Jeremy Love**

54 Kick start your creativity: "I have about five brushes I use for just about everything but sometimes it's beneficial to just make a quick brush to save time. Custom brushes are great for getting a painting started so there's already some texture on the page to paint over. Sometimes it helps me to get started if I'm having a bit of a block." **Jeremy Love**

55 Seek out the best: "I don't actually create my own custom brushes, and until recently I only ever used default brushes as I find custom brushes tend to create images that look gimmicky. I do use some of the brushes from Kyle Webster's Ultimate Brush Set (**www.kyletwebster.com/portfolio/brushes/**), particularly his excellent Chisel Shift 15 brush which gives me a really painterly feel, reminiscent of a short flat oil brush. I'm always looking to have as traditional a feel as possible in my work, so Kyle's brushes are fantastic for this." **Ian McQue**

56 Go custom for speed: "If you want to create more complex things quickly it's always good to use custom brushes and custom shapes. These can help with painting foliage, complex structures and so on." **Jonas De Ro**

57 Be confident: "Use big strong brushstrokes and think about big shapes and values. This will allow you to get ideas down quickly. The secret is to trick the mind that there is a lot to see, even though after closer inspection it is all just painterly blobs. Good control over your fundamentals is key to get the image across." **Jonas De Ro**

58 Whatever brushes you use…. "You can avoid a mirrored look when painting symmetrical subjects like faces or environments, by making sure you alter one side enough to make it more convincing. It seems simple but it's amazing how many artists don't take the time to do it. It's a good idea to use an off-centre vanishing point when doing environments anyway." **Jeremy Love**

59 Match the brush to brief: "For quick thumbnail sketches I like to use brushes that emulate markers and pens as it gives the impression of meaning to look rough." **Jeremy Love**

60 And once you've finished… "Set correction layers on Color if you want your values untouched." **Bjorn Hurri**

Brush off
Even if the image doesn't turn out quite as planned, having made a set of custom brushes is never a waste because you never know when they might turn out to be useful again in the future.

This is one of the best things about Photoshop - you can hone, customize and add to its standard tool set so that it becomes your own unique workshop, from which you can create whatever style of artwork you desire. ▶

• Speed painting

Time and tide wait for no man, and if you want to be a professional Photoshop artist, learning to speed paint is a valuable skill

For many artists, there is no better way to capture the essence of the idea they have in their heads than speed painting. It's not just about working quickly for the sake of it, it's about working quickly so you don't over-think your image, or ruin it by trying too many variations. Speed painting allows you to get at the core of what you want from the image, and whether that's a final result or simply a base from which you can build, it's still a great technique to try. It frees up your creativity and gives you a sense of accomplishment.

61 **More speed, less haste:** "It's important to go from big brushes to small brushes making sure that you don't jump ahead and detail something that might not be important to highlight at that point. So I guess practicing restraint is the key." **Bjorn Hurri**

62 **Not too many shortcuts:** "I also use Color Balance set to Color a lot in my work, but one has to be careful of not overusing it." **Bjorn Hurri**

63 **Step by step:** "I think the best idea is to break a painting down in understandable steps. First is composition, nail that first with as many interesting shapes and values as you can muster. Then you focus on light and colors, and try to make sense of it all. Another way to speed it up is to practice on your flaws and in that way you'll get faster due to an increase in knowledge." **Bjorn Hurri**

64 **Concentrate on color:** "I try to look at color in terms of the character. Whatever I think the character would say or do in the painting will obviously determine my choice of a subtle or strong color and will give the painting a specific feel. It's a balancing act but I tend to use slightly offset triads when painting." **Bjorn Hurri**

65 **Stick to your method:** "The trick is the process: composition, shapes, color and light. You can invert it and begin an image with lights, colors and so on but it will be more experimental and you will probably have some surprises during the drawing. The first process is for a controlled result, the second one for experimentation." **Xavier Etchepare**

66 **Challenge yourself:** "You can work with constraints, like using only one brush, a limited color palette and having a theme before beginning. Why? Respecting some rules helps a lot better than the white space to initiate an illustration. You can feel free to break a white space straight away, but to start it's a good idea to have them to lead your imagination." **Xavier Etchepare**

67 **Commit, collapse:** "Collapse your layers and commit yourself to paint on one and only one layer. Take this opportunity to blend the colors in a more natural and painterly touch." **Raphael Lacoste**

68 **Borrow a mood:** "Photoshop is a great tool to process color palettes. There is a great Match Color tool that allows you to take the mood from a photo or image and apply it partially to an illustration. Sometimes I like to extract the mood of photos and landscapes I have shot and use them in my illustrations." **Raphael Lacoste**

69 **Know where you're going:** "Like in traditional painting, I prefer to work big to small, getting all the big shapes blocked in and solid before moving into using smaller brushes. Whether it's blocking-in the elements and creating the composition of an illustration or blocking-in the gesture and

● Brett Bean believes in taking his time and getting the basics right © Brett Bean

● Different painting techniques should be employed, depending on the impact you want to create © Bjorn Hurri
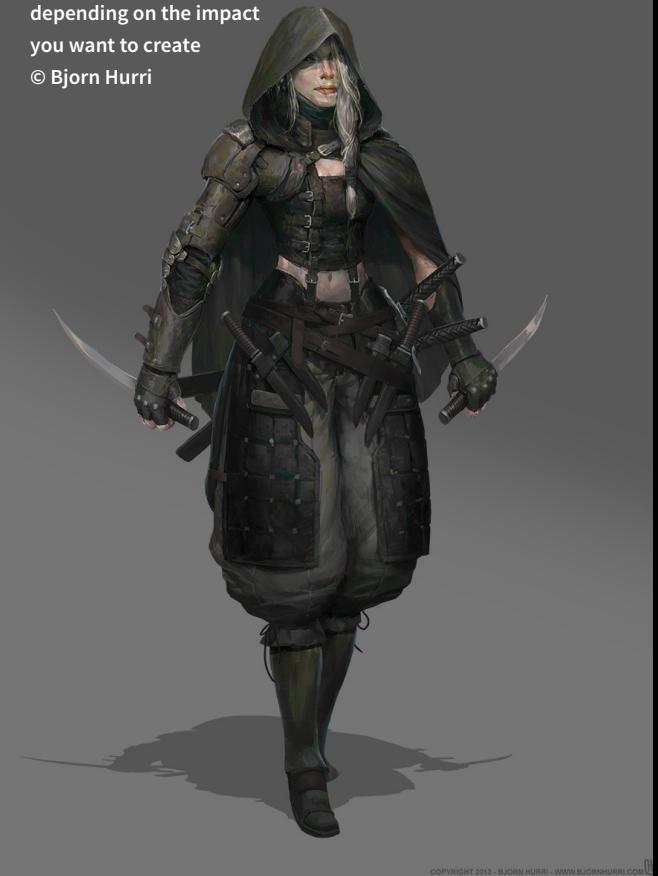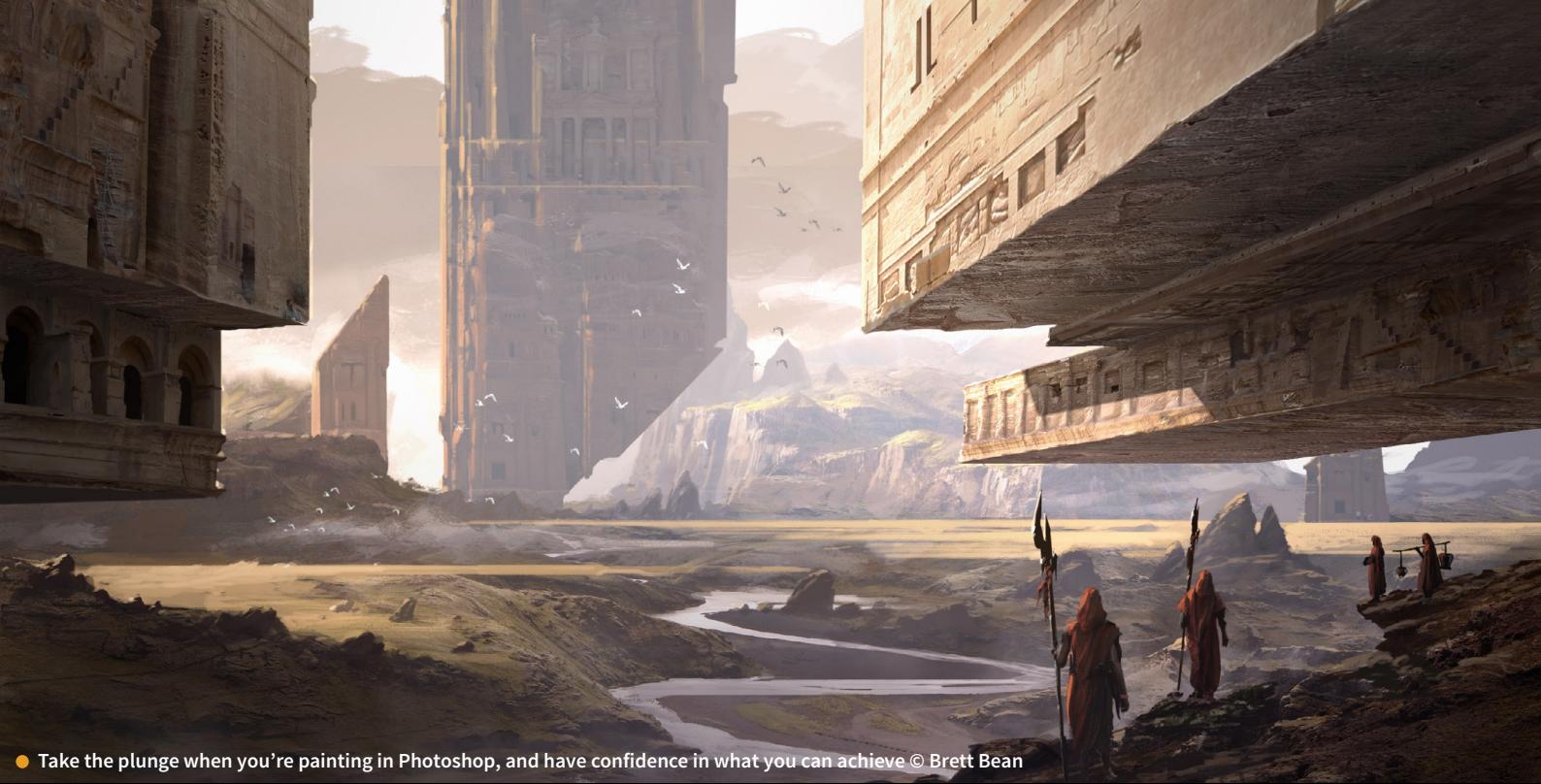
● Take the plunge when you're painting in Photoshop, and have confidence in what you can achieve © Brett Bean

physical build of a character for a concept piece, I want that solid framework really figured out and established before going into any sort of rendering." **Wesley Burt**

70 **Practice makes perfect:** "Accruing accuracy from experience will make you faster, whether you realize it or not. Yes, you need to be fairly fast to work in the entertainment industry, but just being fast doesn't do anything if you don't have the solid foundations and ideas to go with it." **Wesley Burt**

71 **Tool up:** "You get faster as you become more comfortable with the tools and begin to know the result you want to get, and aren't restrained by the tools. That also comes from becoming less indecisive and having a clear idea for what it is your and doing and why." **Wesley Burt**

72 **Think colorful thoughts:** "Color can be used in many ways to convey meaning or emotion, you can use it to emphasize certain things or lead the eye through the composition with rich saturated colors or through hue shifts and changing tones. I will employ color differently depending on what it is I am trying to do and how it will help or affect the current image I'm working on." **Wesley Burt**

73 **Back to basics:** "Concentrate on your foreground, mid ground, and background. In my opinion, an image needs a sense of storytelling and a composition to lead the eye. No tricks, just a real thought behind the action. Mostly I just see people scribbling for an hour and it usually equals the term I like to call, "beautified nothing." **Brett Bean**

74 **Slow down:** "Take your time and get it right. I think it is very hard to put a personal touch from the artist in a speed-painting so I rarely engage in the activity. I would only use it as an under-painting as part of a larger piece of work. I don't normally just speed paint for the sake of it." **Brett Bean**

75 **Pick up the pace:** "I've downloaded a timer which sits on my second monitor. I set time limits for each block of work and try to stick to it. It stops me from getting distracted and keeps me working efficiently." **Jeremy Love**

76 **Don't look too close:** "I typically don't zoom in past 50% until the finishing touches to avoid overworking with pointless detailing. Most people don't look at an image for more than several seconds so I try to only add detail that I feel is essential. Create the illusion of detail without zooming right in." **Jeremy Love**

77 **Hone your observation:** "By practicing all the time you will become faster at achieving what you want. Every spare moment you get, you should be drawing, painting, and observing. Always look at how light and shadow describe the object they're acting upon, this is the basis of all good painting." **Jeremy Love**

78 **Capture the essence of an idea:** "Speed-painting isn't something that you achieve just by opening Photoshop and bashing in some photos or texture brushes. A speed-painting is the rough expression of an idea, capturing the essence with as little effort as possible, and it takes years of practice to master." **Ioan Dumitrescu**

79 **Do it over and over:** "Speed your process up by repetition. Once you have done something long enough it becomes second nature, that's when you can start exploring other processes in your work. Remember, you will always have your usual method to fall back on for success." **Ioan Dumitrescu**

80 **Learn your shortcuts:** "A vital part of being fast is using keyboard shortcuts and having organized brushes. Know your tools and learn them inside out. Humans are an incredible species, before you know it you will be able to do everything inside Photoshop without even needing to think about it. Your hand will live a life of its own and help you switch tools quickly. Another thing that can help is making your own panels with tools or actions you use a lot. You can use Adobe Configurator to make these easily." **Jonas De Ro**

Not your cup of tea?
While there are plenty of artists who swear by the speed painting method, there are plenty more who think it a gimmick. So give it a go by all means, but don't think that you can't be a professional or that you aren't as good an artist if it doesn't suit you.

That said, all professional artists will have to work to a deadline at some time in their artistic career, so the ability to work under pressure and, perhaps more importantly, to be able to quickly and simply express the direction your work is going to go in, is of vital use. Speed is of the essence, it seems. ▶

• Lighting, mood and atmosphere

Ready to set the mood? Photoshop has a powerful array of features that'll allow you to light a scene with ease

Mood is everything. If you have painted a picture that is accurate in detail, but somehow fails to come alive, then it's to lighting and color and the other things that impact on atmosphere that you must turn. After all, if your image doesn't make the viewer feel something – feel anything – then what, really, is the point of it? And besides that, creating feeling for your imagery is the fun part, so read on to see what our experts have to say.

81 Dodge details: "I find using Color Dodge with a high saturated midrange color works really well to help light areas and tweak the base of your painting. I use it mostly on areas which are receiving a lot of light or that I want to add subtle color variations to." **Bjorn Hurri**

82 Light fantastic: "There are two categories here where I use light differently. The first one is concept art where the light can't be too dramatic and all the areas need to be more or less readable, and the second category is obviously illustration. When doing an illustration I focus on mood a lot more. Light can be heavy or light depending on the direction of the illustration but I always try to use light to dictate a specific mood in the subject. It is a huge part of my art." **Bjorn Hurri**

83 Give it a back light: "I found a contrasted backlight really effective because it reveals shapes clearly and hides secondary details. It's important for me to have many shadows on my images because I can hide or accentuate as I want." **Xavier Etchepare**

84 Think mood, but also clarity: "For me lighting is key for creating both emotions and readability. You can have expressive characters and perfect compositions, but lighting will always empower them. An image doesn't look realistic or believable because of its details but because of your comprehension of all volumes and materials, and this is exactly the definition of the lighting effect." **Xavier Etchepare**

85 Balance light and shade: "You'll find that viewers will focus on light space, and see the shadowed areas as a border, (long lines, contrasts, and so on). You have to manage both and balance the intensity of each

● A sci-fi world demands that you present an arresting mood and atmosphere © Jeremy Love

● Lighting a scene can be tricky, admits Ioan Dumitrescu © Ioan Dumitrescu

to avoid disparate focus points. You have to play with colors in each one because a realistic shadow is never black/grey - this is the same for the white light. Mother Nature makes the things complex, so don't feel limited." **Xavier Etchepare**

86 Shape the vibe: "Your choice of elements has a big impact. Smooth shapes will make you comfortable, triangular ones will look more aggressive or dynamic, square ones feel heavy and stable, and so on..." **Xavier Etchepare**

87 Think about what you don't see: "I love to create 'moments'. Composition and color is key, and even on a static image you can create a moving and immersive moment. I think that creating mystery in an image, by giving some areas less detail or making them lost in the mist for instance, helps create a more interesting picture." **Raphael Lacoste**

88 Learn from the world: "I think that the best way to learn lighting is

observation. I have been doing photography now for more than 20 years, with 6x6 cameras, film and digital, and this has educated my eyes a lot. You will also learn from every day observation. Look at your friends under the light when you have a drink in a bar, look at the sky when you drive back from vacations (don't stare for too long!), look at surfaces, how reflection works, what colors are in the shade, and so on..." **Raphael Lacoste**

89 Use body language: "If there is a human (or human-esque) character, you can create mood very effectively through the gesture and body language of that character. We as humans pick up on the subtlest changes and angles when it comes to the face and body or other people. Our visual communication is extremely honed and you can rely on the viewer using this perception when they look at the character or pick up on the narrative." **Wes Burt**

90 Strong and simple: "For characters, I use a three-point light scheme: main light, bounce light, and rim light. It's basic but it lets an audience, a client,

● Jonas says low and back lighting always gives a more romantic feeling © Jonas De Ro

● What isn't seen can often be as important for the image as what is © Brett Bean

and a modeler know everything they need to understand about the scene. If you're painting an environment, what I find most effective is a strong main light source coupled with bold decisions in shadows. Dramatic lighting is my favorite to view and create." **Brett Bean**

91 Know your goal: "It's all in service of 'the point of it'. Everything from how shadows fall to where the main light source is placed, serves the overall idea. Is it to show off an alien world with three moons? Is it because this is where the hero doubts himself? Is this when two people fall in love? Does the villain really end up being the hero? And sometimes it's just to show the 3D team how something works." **Brett Bean**

92 Examine the unseen: "I use light and shadow to draw the eye to what I want them to see, or not see. It's just as scary to see the alien as it is to see dark spaces where the alien could always be lurking. Something we tend to forget." **Brett Bean**

93 Bring it all together: "To help sell the mood you can start thinking of the scenery surrounding the piece. Little things

help sell the reality. Look at film - the mood is about the costumes, the lighting, the textures, the camera setting and composition, and whatever else is just lying around. All of these add up to the overall mood and setting." **Brett Bean**

94 Darkest before the dawn: "I like to use a Global Darken layer then erase out areas I want to stand out or where light shines, like the focal object in a room or light coming through a doorway." **Jeremy Love**

95 Think about the big picture: "I think about how I can cast shadows into the image using objects which may be off shot, like clouds or buildings. It can help break up your image and contrast areas of interest." **Jeremy Love**

96 Have your cake and eat it: "A good way to add light and shadow to paintings is to duplicate an unlit, flat colored layer and then create a shadow version of this by using the Hue/Saturation dialogue (Ctrl+U) to darken and desaturate the image. Then create lit passages using the Eraser tool or the Lasso tool to define selections that you can then delete. This allows the original unlit layer to be visible through the shadow layer, effectively creating a lit and shaded form." **Ian Mcque**

97 Straight to the point: "Mood can be created through many ways, such as shape relations, color blending, light, characters and action. Sharp shapes generally denote danger while rounder shapes calm things down. Light and shadow can transform a character from a gentle calm old man to a scary creeping character." **Ioan Dumitrescu**

98 Try a sidestep: "Lighting a scene can be tricky. You can use the

generic atmospheric perspective and just add a backlighting to your image. This creates a lot of mood. On the opposite end, front lit scenes are harder to nail as the image will have the tendency to appear flat. Directing light from the sides can bring up interesting lighting situations, whereas a play of shadow and light will complete your composition." **Ioan Dumitrescu**

99 Everybody loves sunsets: "Generally concept artists play around a lot with lighting to set a mood. Low light and back lighting are very popular and always give a more romantic/dramatic feeling. There is a reason everyone loves sunsets. When an atmosphere is thick, for example because of smoke or dust, light rays tend to become more visible. This is called volumetric light and is a fun and popular technique to bring the usage of light to the next level!" **Jonas De Ro**

100 Hold onto your values: "Good color and value control is key to establishing mood. Putting warm colors against cold, or vibrant against desaturated often gives pleasing results. Another good thing to do is play with atmospheric perspective. This instantly creates a sense of mystery and also makes it much easier for your image to read, particularly if there is a lot of depth going on." **Jonas De Ro**

Mean and moody

And with your lighting complete, you can take a step back from your work and have a well-earned rest. There's always more about Photoshop you can learn, another feature you can explore or trick you can pick up, but there's always tomorrow for that. As all these artists say, nothing really beats pure artistic skill, practice, and a lot of hard work. In some ways, Photoshop is the easy bit. ●

Celebrating **100** issues
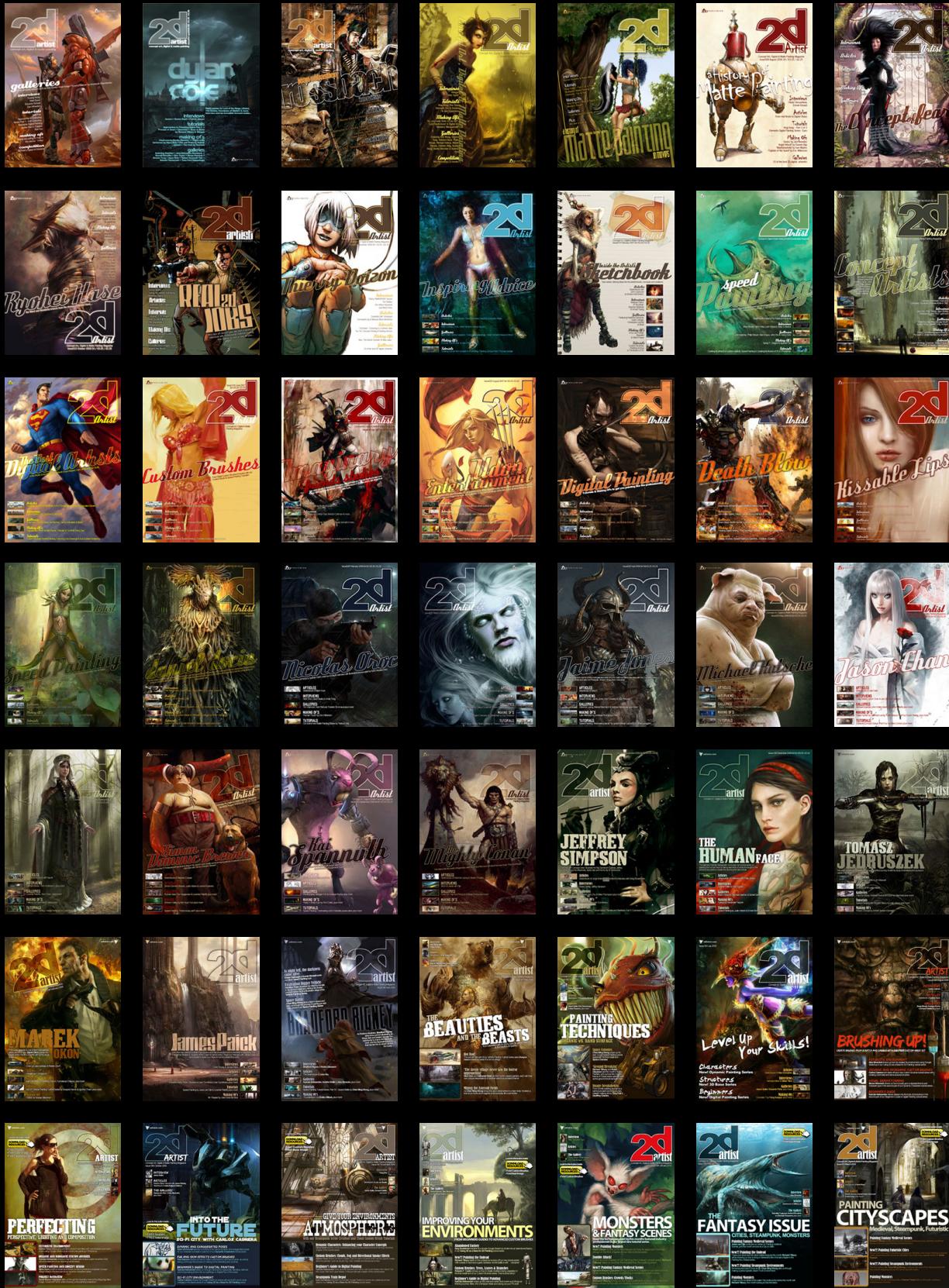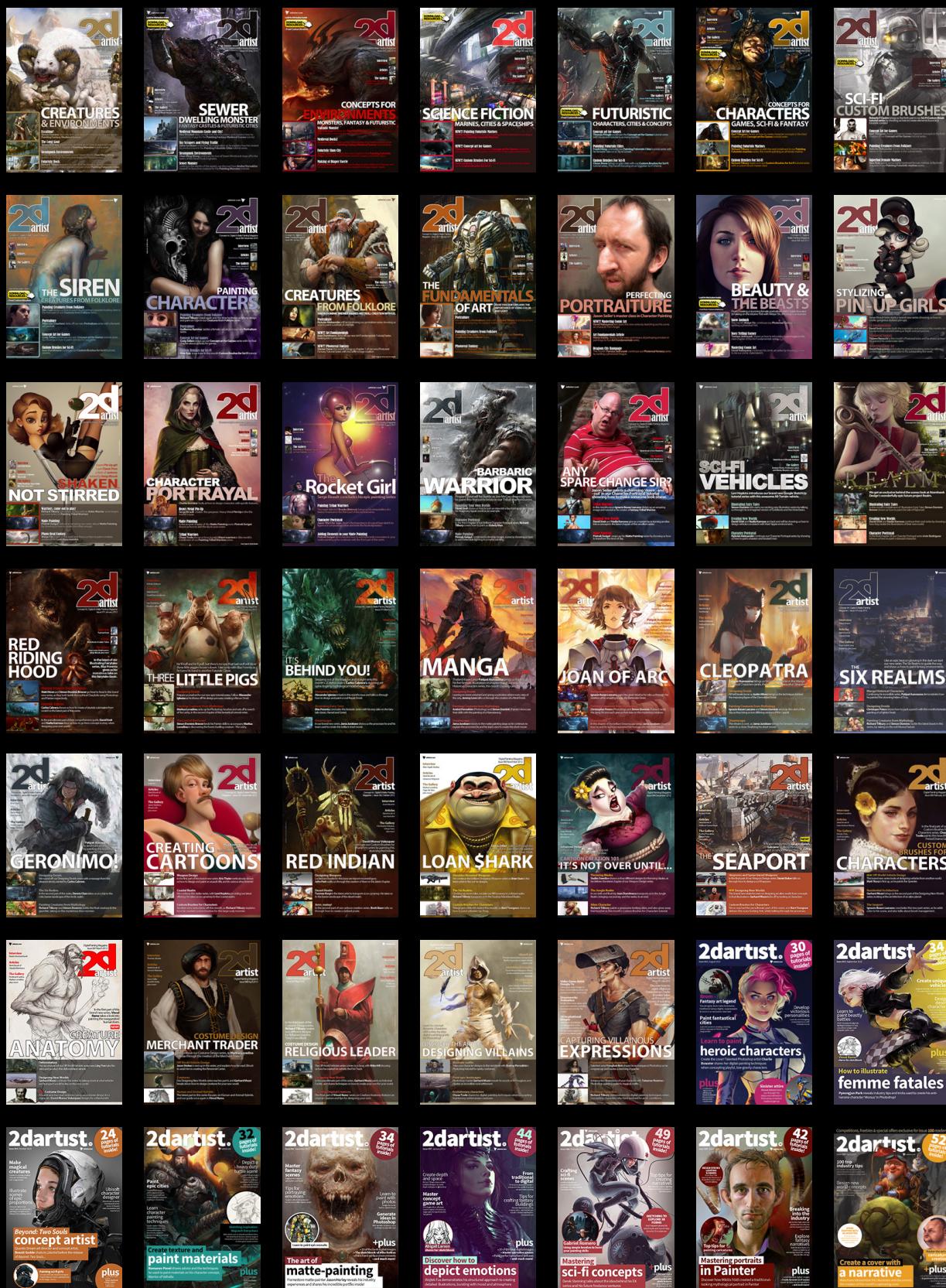
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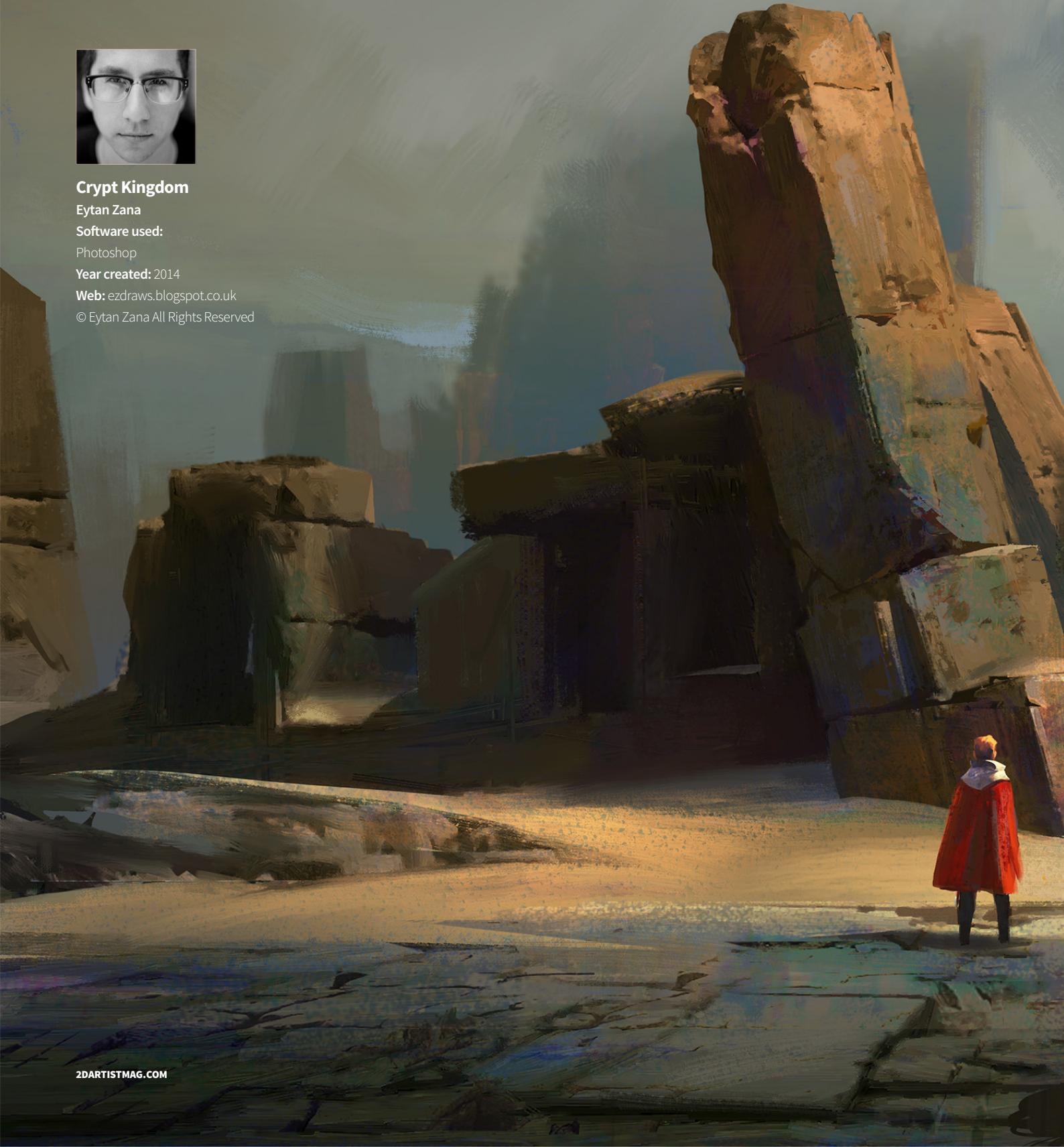
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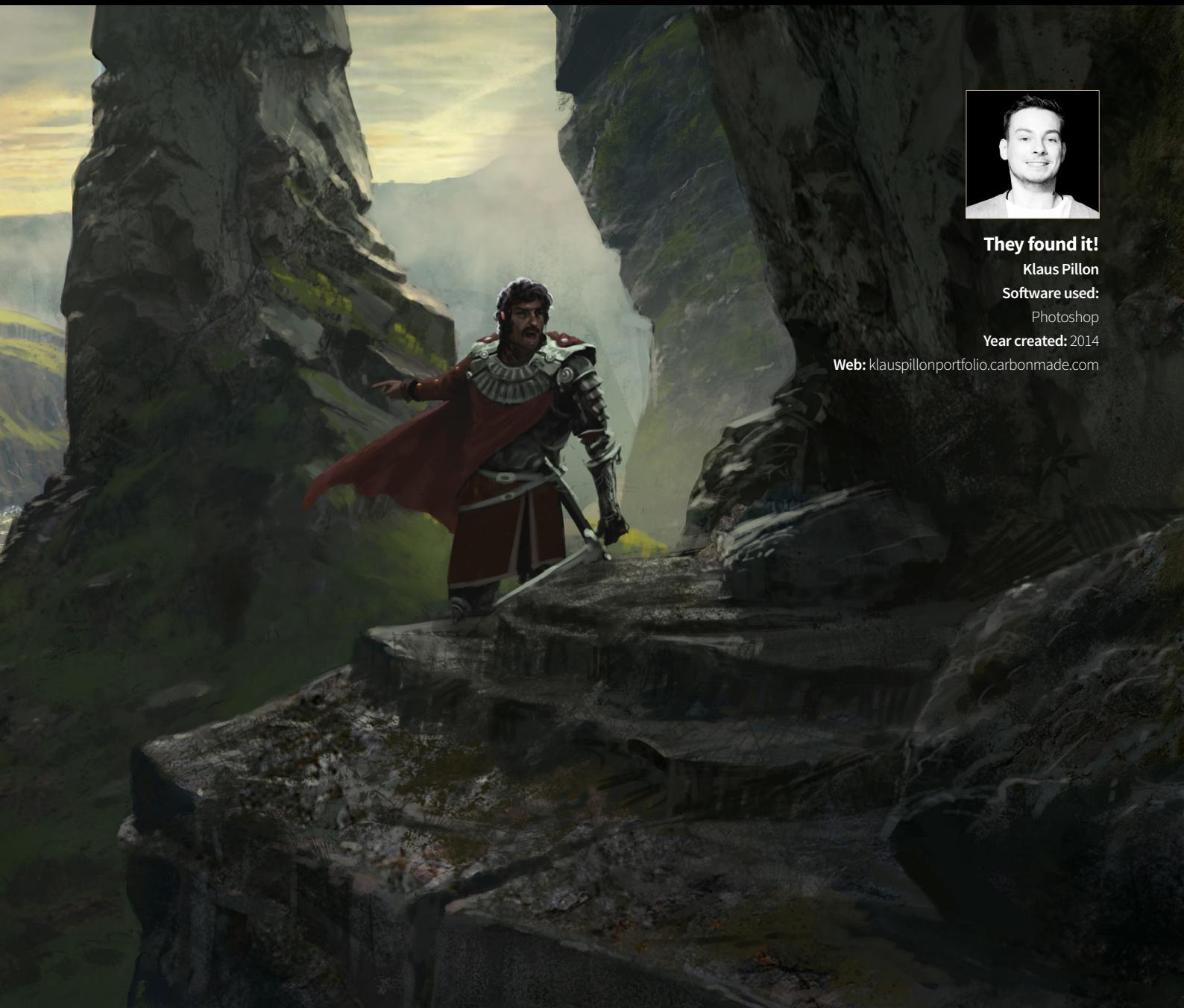
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Web: jess-studio.com

Graphic LA
Robh Ruppel
Software used:
Photoshop
Year created: 2011
Web: graphicla.tumblr.com

ButterFlyer
Jason Stokes
Software used:
Photoshop
Year created: 2013
Web: stokes.cghub.com

New World
Titus Lunter
Software used:
Photoshop
Year created: 2013
Web: tituslunter.com

THE DIGITAL PAINTING RESOURCE

LayerPaint allows you to browse the gallery, interviews, news, tutorials and products all dedicated to 2D digital art. On top of that, we have included a free custom brushes library that is available to everyone.

We wish LayerPaint to be a definitive resource for digital painting, creating a friendly and educational environment that not only helps budding and experienced CG artists alike, but also showcases some of the best computer generated artwork in the world.

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Competitions, freebies & special offers exclusive for issue **100** readers!
Turn the page to find out more!

Win a copy of CrazyTalk Animator 2 Pipeline worth over $299 US!

CrazyTalk Animator is a revolutionary animation suite with all the necessary tools to easily create pro-level animation. It provides an exciting new approach to traditional 2D animation with innovative new tools that allow users to apply 3D motions to 2D characters.

New powerful features have opened new possibilities for freely editing 2D motions and viewing them from any angle with a single click. In addition to HumanIK motion editing and seamless mix-and-match character customization, CrazyTalk Animator also offers creative and fun visual render styles that can dictate or enhance the mood of any scene. While powerful features like body motion puppet and auto lip-sync further reinforce its position as the most creative tool for 2D character animation.
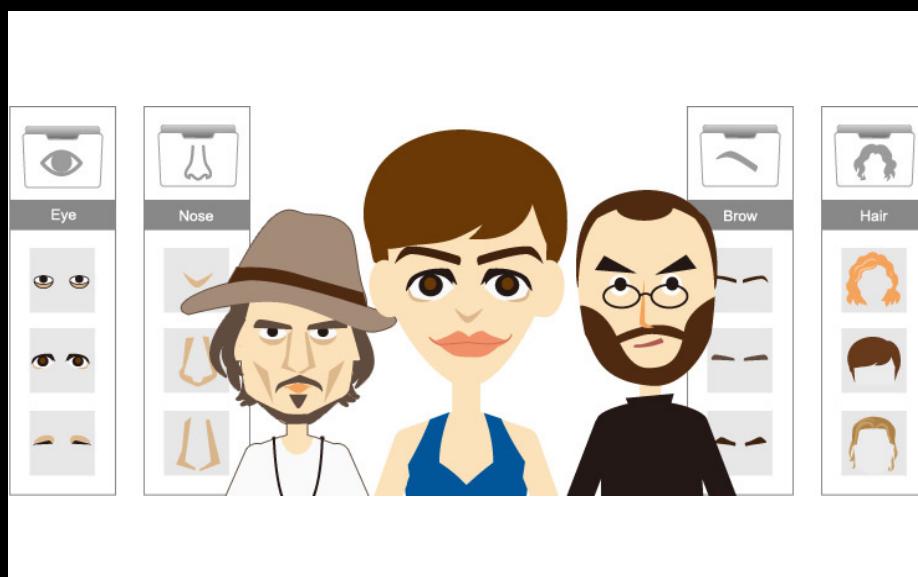
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- Instantly stylize projects for different scenarios
- Employ 3D motion editing for 2D characters
- Turn any 2D photos into talking characters

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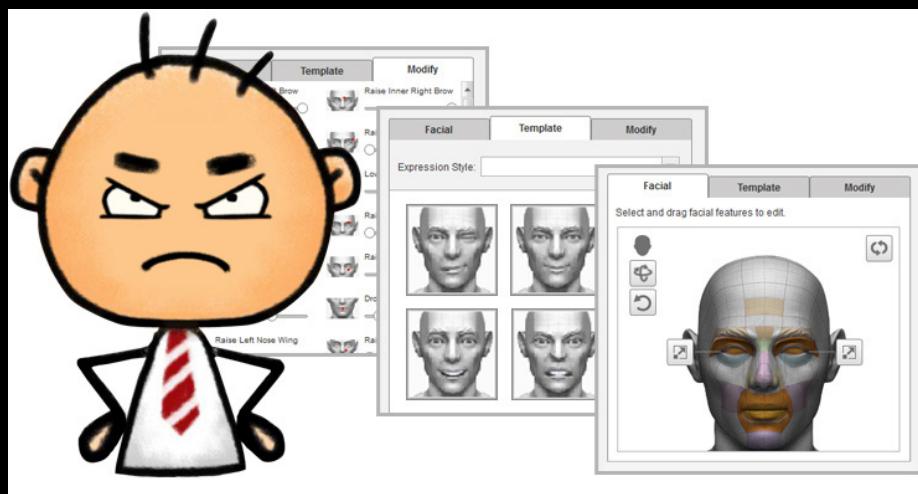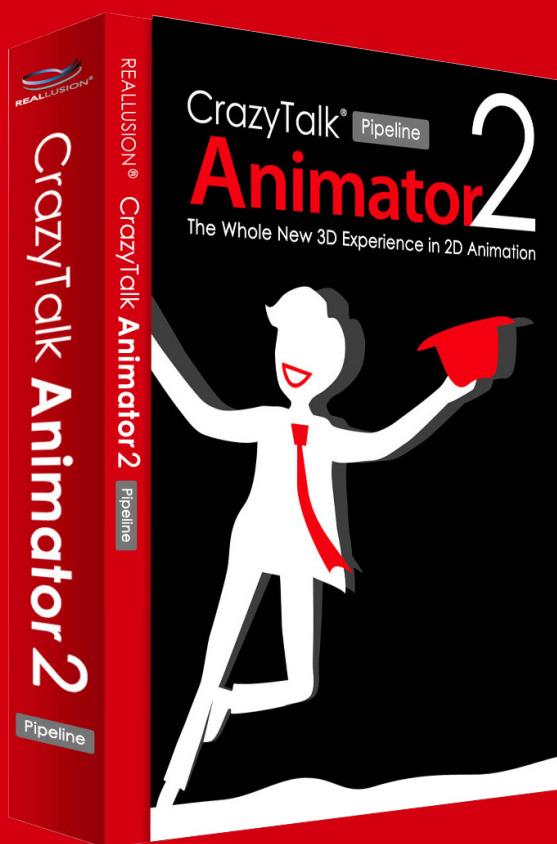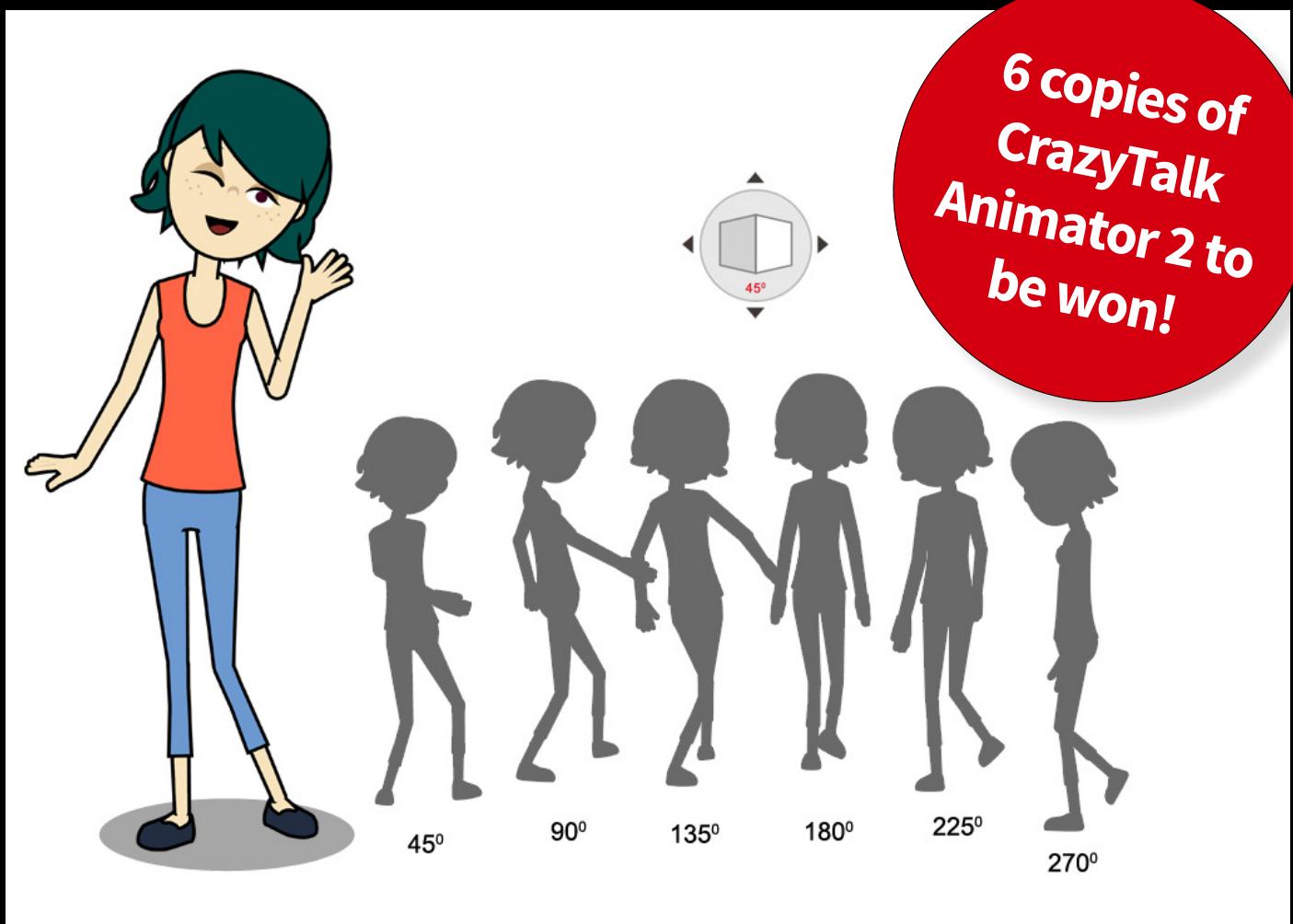
To be in with the chance of winning one of 6 copies of CrazyTalk Animator 2 Pipeline, just answer the question below before 31 May...

CrazyTalk Animator is now in which version?

Choose from one of the following answers:

a) 6
b) 2
c) 1

Send your answer to **competitions@3dtotal.com** with the subject line: **'CrazyTalk competition'**. The competition deadline is 31 May 2014.

Be sure to include your name and answer within the email so we can contact the lucky winners!

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a copy of ArtRage 4 worth $49.90 US!

5 copies of ArtRage 4 to be won!

ArtRage 4 offers unique touch-friendly workflow advantages optimized for pen tablet users. The art creation app takes full advantage of the new Windows 8 multi-touch tablets, laptops and desktops. ArtRage 4 not only allows rotation, scale, and movement of the canvas with two fingers, but it can even utilize simple one-finger-touch gestures with layers, selections, rulers, stencils, stickers and reference images.

ArtRage is available for Mac, Windows, iPad and iPhone. Whether using a pen, brush, drawing tablet, mouse or even a finger, ArtRage provides the experience of actually "painting" digitally on a computer canvas with oil paints that smear and blend, and watercolors that flow together to create soft, wet gradations, just as they would in a traditional art studio.

To be in with the chance of winning one of five copies of ArtRage 4, just answer the questions below before 31 May…

Questions

1. ArtRage is…?
a) Popular painting software
b) An art gallery
c) An art school
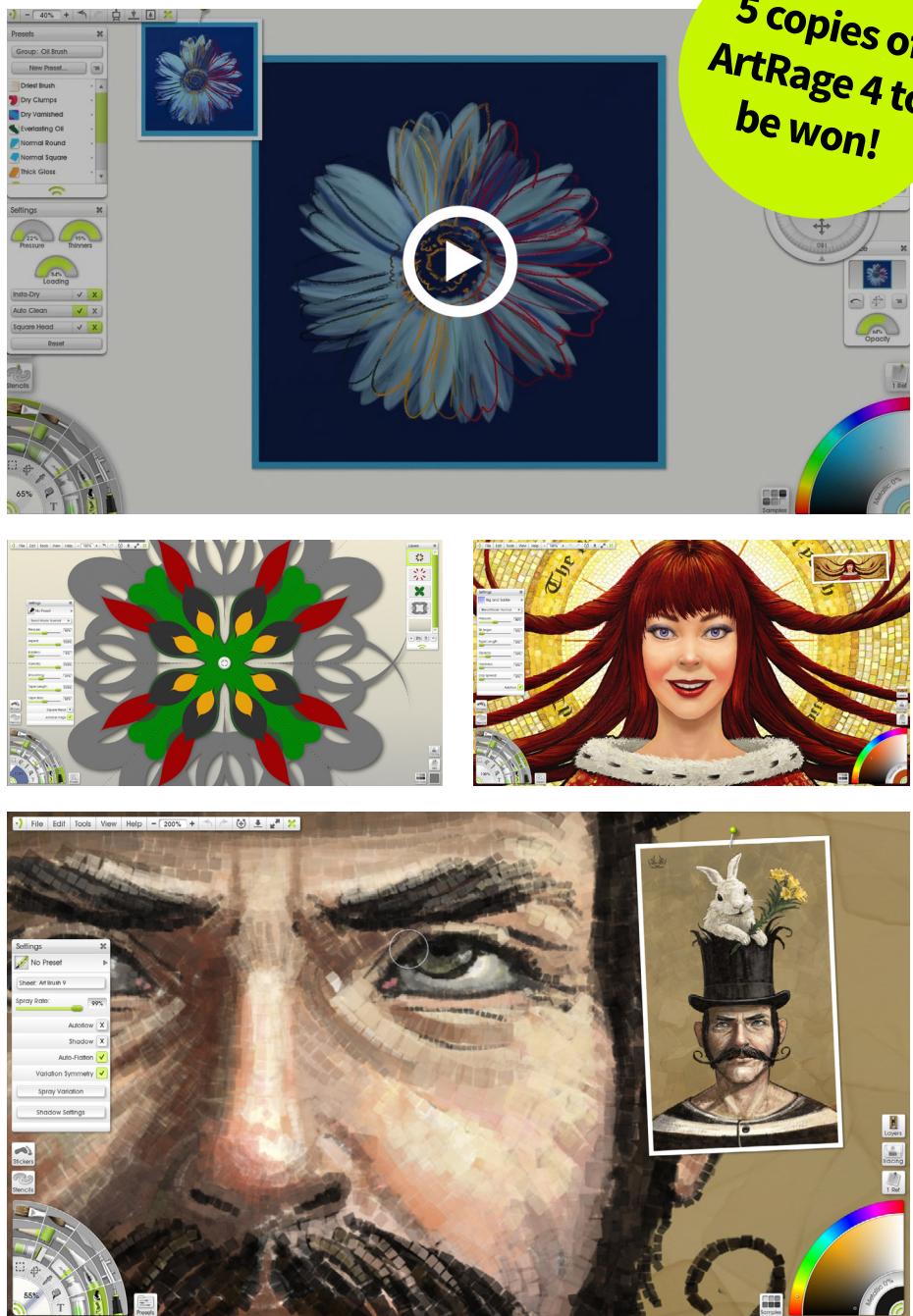
2. Can ArtRage 4 be used on a touch-screen device?
a) Yes
b) No

3. What other devices and platforms can ArtRage be used on?
a) iPhone
b) iPad
c) Mac
d) Windows
e) All of the above

Send your answers to **competitions@3dtotal.com** with the subject line: **'ArtRage competition'**. The competition deadline is 31 May 2014. Be sure to include your name and answer within the email so we can contact the lucky winners!

Ambient Design is a New Zealand based software development company specializing in creative tools for artists. Our work across desktop and mobile platforms focuses on creating natural tools with intuitive interfaces that let artists from both tradi-tional and digital backgrounds paint without having to learn digital tricks to get realistic results.

ArtRage 4

Win a free course worth $800 US!

Phoenix Atelier is an online school focused on teaching the artistic, creative and technical principles, by which characters and creatures are brought to life within the entertainment industry. The school's online programs are constructed to help those wishing to fast-track their careers though dedicated mentorship. In every program, each student is given access to learning materials via text, video, images, daily forum interaction plus live weekly reviews. On top of this, the private forums give students the required support and attention needed to communicate with other classmates and instructors.

2dartist magazine has teamed up Phoenix Atelier to offer the awesome opportunity to win a seat on Adrian Smith's Phoenix Atelier course, *Fantastic Fantasy*, and join the Phoenix Atelier Family Alumni. There are also extra prizes for second and third place winners!

Phoenix Atelier - sparking the flame of your creativity

Prizes

First prize: Win a seat on Adrian Smith's / Fantastic Fantasy/ course, worth $800 US!
Adrian Smith's list of clients credits reads like a dream for any aspiring artist; in no particular order: THQ, EA, Mythic Entertainment, Ubisoft Entertainment, Vivendi, Blizzard, Wizards of the Coast... And if that wasn't enough, Adrian has also worked with the likes of Pat Mills on comics for the French marketplace, plus board games, tabletop games as well as work for various publishers around the world. Adrian Smith has the pulse of the fantasy and sci-fi community and is an industry standard and referenced artist as a true imaginary. The course starts on 26 May 2014.

Second prize: Win a Phoenix Atelier hoodie and T-shirt, plus a USB featuring Cesar Dacol Junior's /Sculpt an 80s Rock Demon/ tutorial, worth $130 US!
Cesar Dacol Junior has been working in the film industry for nearly 30 years. He has served as modeling supervisor on films like /Slither/, /300/ and /Journey to the Center of the Earth/ and is the founder of Phoenix Atelier. On the USB prize, Cesar pays homage to the awesome 80s heavy metal album covers by creating his very own version.

Third prize: Win a Phoenix Atelier T-shirt, plus a USB featuring Cesar Dacol Junior's /Sculpt an 80s Rock Demon/ tutorial, worth $80 US!

To be in with the chance of winning one of these fantastic prizes, just answer the questions below before 19 May...

Questions

1. Which of the Phoenix Atelier instructors work at Weta Workshop and designed characters for The Hobbit?
a) Andrew Baker
b) Cezar Brandao
c) Adrian Smith

2. Which of the following clients has Phoenix Atelier instructor Adrian Smith _not_ worked for?
a) THQ
b) Ubisoft Entertainment
c) Pixar

Send your answer to **competitions@3dtotal.com** with the subject line: 'Phoenix Atelier competition'. The competition deadline is 19 May 2014.

Be sure to include your name and answer within the email so we can contact the lucky winners!

Win a copy of DrawPlus X6 worth £81.69!
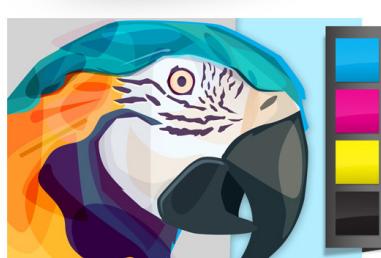
DrawPlus X6 is a powerful and easy-to-use graphics studio for illustrators and hobbyists looking to create digital art. DrawPlus X6, from creative software developer, Serif, promises to be the fastest and most accomplished version yet, offering native 64-bit compatibility and more powerful tools to produce outstanding vector art, graphics and animations.

The latest version of the award-winning DrawPlus has been designed for professional graphic designers, enthusiasts and amateurs wanting to express their creativity in the home or office. The feature-packed program is great for diverse tasks such as drawing vector art, sketching ideas, designing logos and diagrams, painting naturally, turning photos into artwork, and creating animations – regardless of previous experience.

10 copies of DrawPlus X6 to be won!
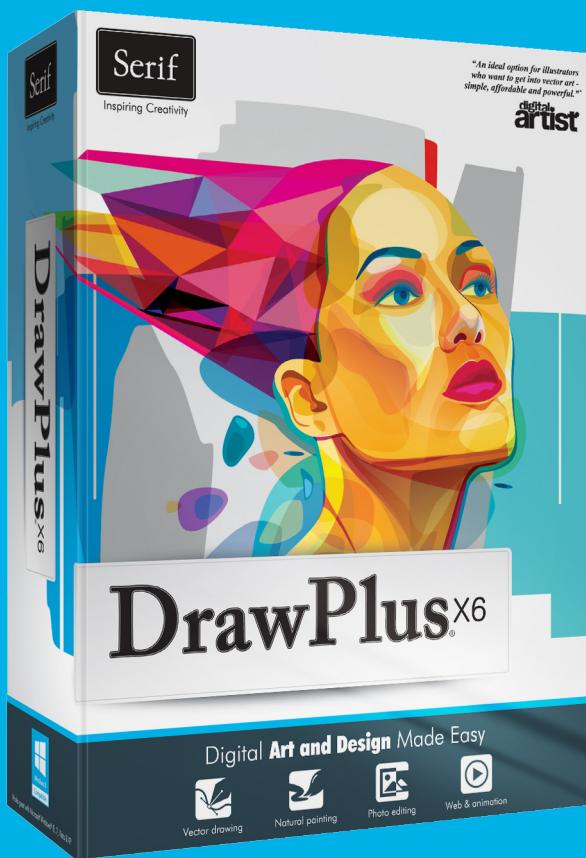
To be in with the chance of winning one of 10 copies of DrawPlus X6, just answer the question below before 31 May...

You can use Serif's DrawPlus X6 to...?

Choose from one of the following answers:

a) **Create a website**
b) **Produce graphic art and animations**
c) **Make a home video**

Send your answer to **competitions@3dtotal.com** with the subject line: '**DrawPlus competition**'. The competition deadline is 31 May 2014.

Be sure to include your name and answer within the email so we can contact the lucky winners!

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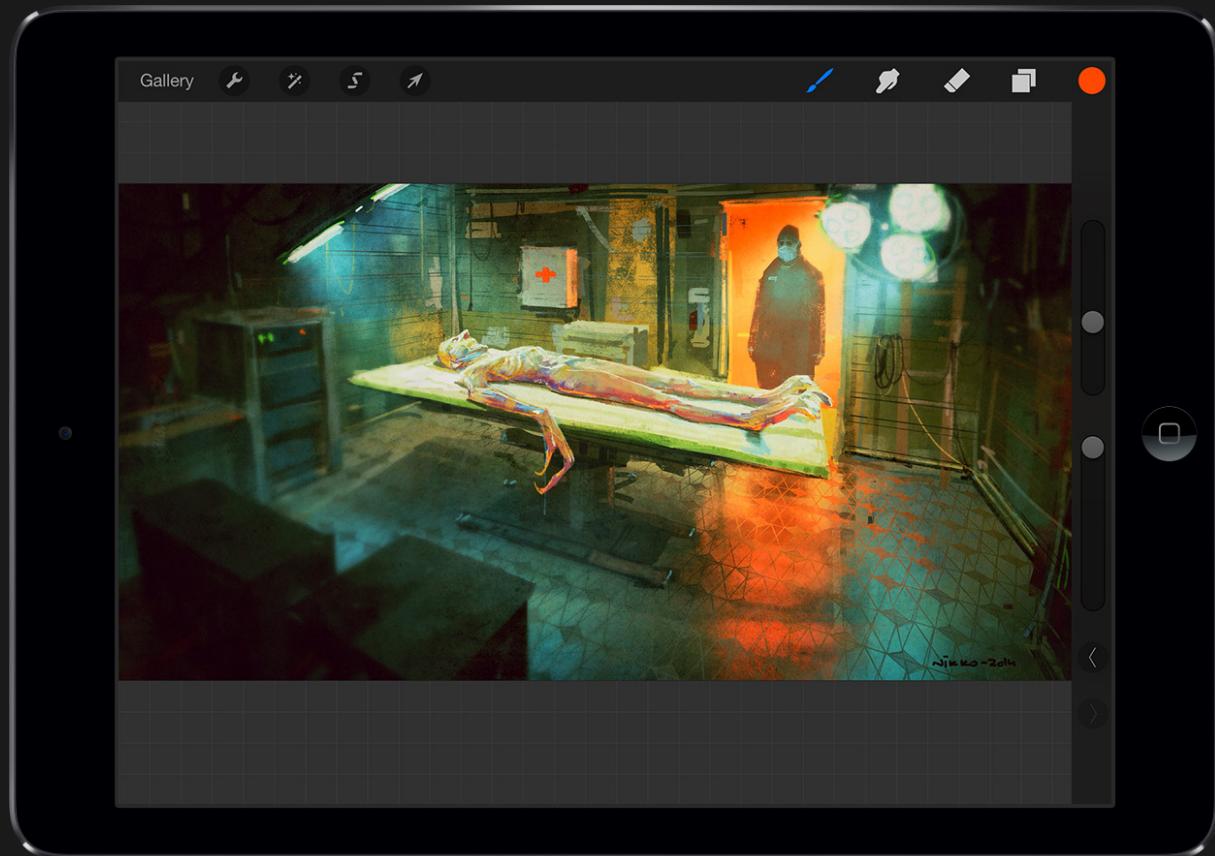
Want to win a copy?

Just email your answer to the following question for your chance to win a free copy of Procreate: *How big (in kilopixels) is the largest canvas size in Procreate?* Send your answer to: *competitions@3dtotal.com*

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Coolorus is a color wheel for Adobe Products (Photoshop, Flash, After Effects) and all native Mac apps that uses native Apple color picker. Save 30% with our special reader discount!

What is Coolorus?

Coolorus is a color wheel panel similar to Corel Painter's much-loved tool, but enhanced even further with many features that have been crafted with great precision to meet every digital painter's needs. The aim of Coolorus is to take the color-picking experience to a whole new level.

Whether you're a digital painter or graphic designer, Coolorus is there to help you make better - and faster - color choices. Thanks to built-in features such as Gamut Masks, Luma Lock, Color Sliders, Mixer, Hue Modes, Color Harmony Schemes and much more, Coolorus is a great choice for any professional artist - and even big companies that want to make their artists lives easier.

Coolorus is for creative people who would like to improve their color-picking workflow as much as possible. Reducing mouse clicks to the minimum, learn about color relationships and the power of triangle HSV representation!

Exclusively to 2dartist magazine, Coolorus is offering a special 30% discount for readers. Simply click on the discount code below to head to the Coolorus purchase page - all you need to do is hit 'Process my order' and the rest is done for you.

Coolorus 2.0
Color Wheel for Adobe Photoshop®
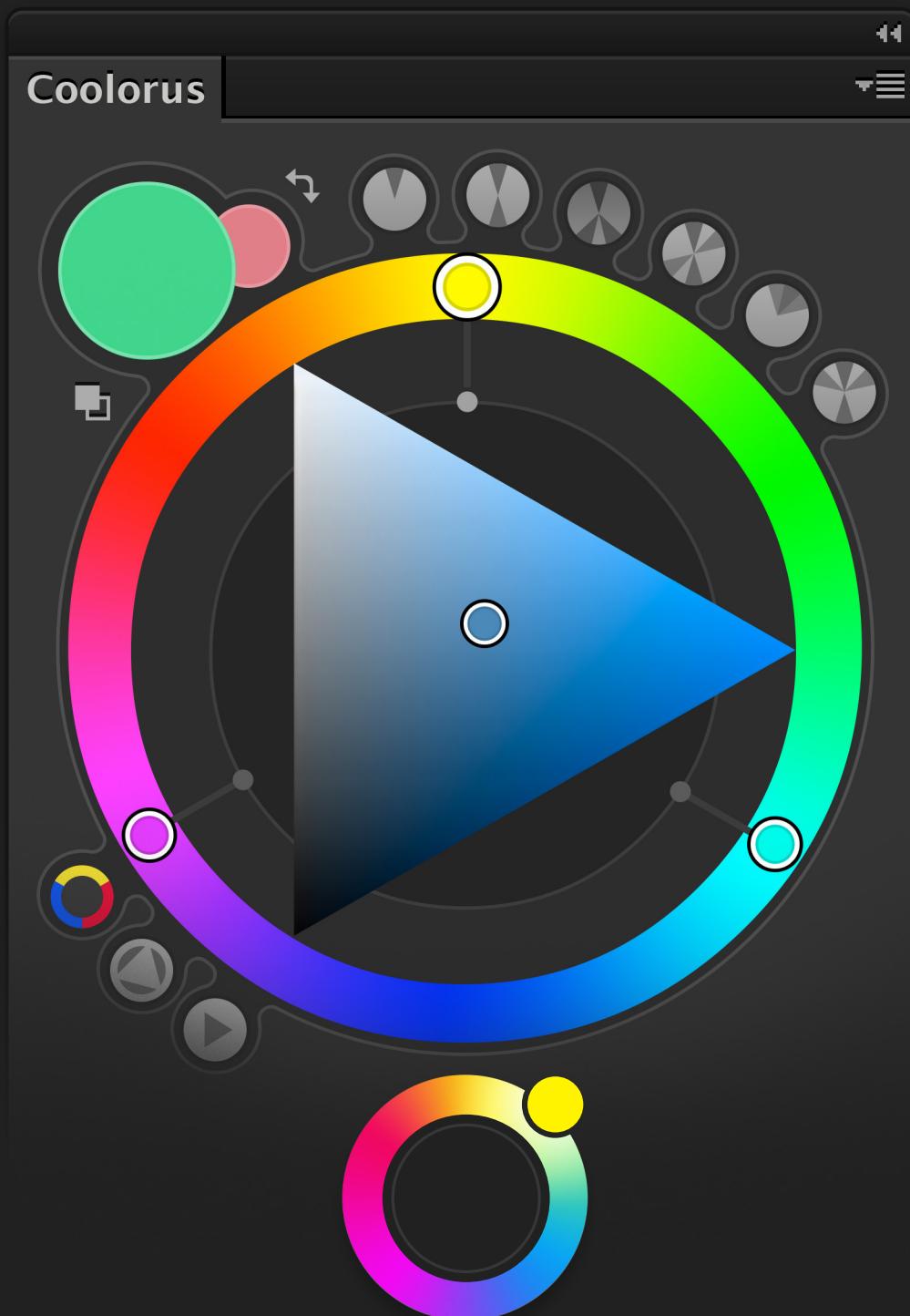
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The PYMCA store is offering an exclusive 20% discount on its youth culture books and iconic photographic prints with the special reader discount code: **2DARTISTREADER**

About PYMCA

PYMCA is a unique and specialist photographic youth and music culture archive, condensing years of experience into a library of over 100,000 images of social history and youth culture, spanning more than 150 years. Hell-bent on documenting every tribe and trend in an ever-flourishing culture, PYMCA works with its photographers to gather and archive every social and cultural nuance into its vast and focused range of imagery and research texts. PYMCA works to provide free resources to further and higher education modules offering students free access to a broad range of imagery for reference and research (students can gain free access at PYMCA.com by clicking on 'Education'). PYMCA now works with submissions too, and aims to showcase younger talent through a range of mediums through its **free web-based zine**.

Exclusively to 2dartist magazine, PYMCA is offering 20% off of all items from its **PYMCA store** including youth culture books and iconic photographic prints with the discount code: **2DARTISTREADER**. There is also 20% off image licensing fees for any creative projects 2dartist readers may be embarking on at **www.PYMCA.com**. Readers should mention 2dartist magazine when requesting a quote. Discounts are valid until **31 May 2014**.

PYMCA
PHOTOGRAPHIC YOUTH MUSIC CULTURE ARCHIVE

Free brushes!

2dartist has teamed up with Ignacio Bazán Lazcano and Min Yum to offer 2 free brush packs to every reader!
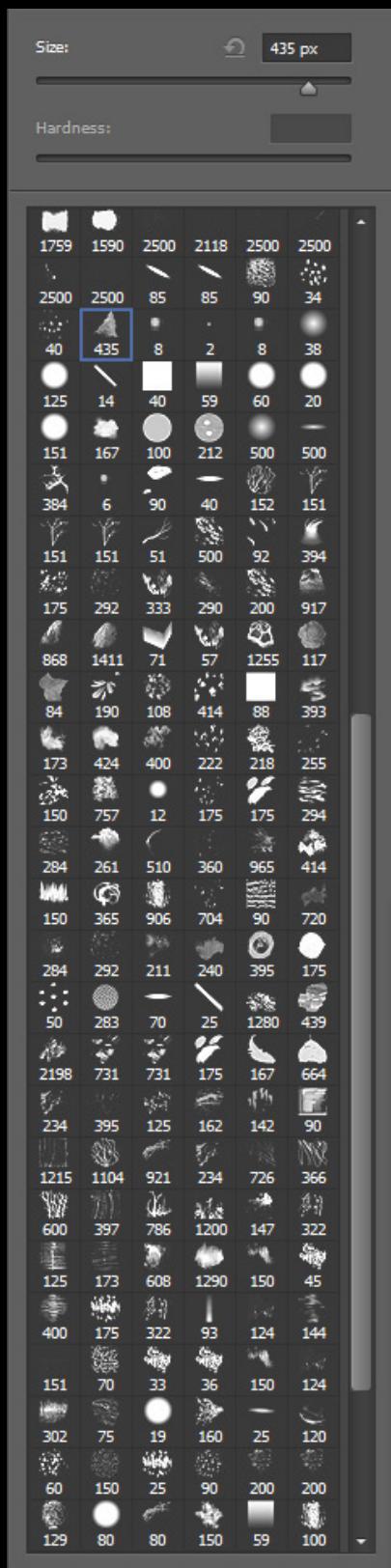
Ignacio Bazán Lazcano
Ignacio Bazán Lazcano is a freelancer concept artist and illustrator working in the game industry for companies such as Gameloft, Sabarasa, Timegate, and others. Ignacio is currently working from his studio in Buenos Aires, Argentina.
Web: www.neisbeis.deviantart.com

Min Yum (aka bumskee)
Min Yum is a Concept artist/illustrator working in the entertainment industry in Sydney, Australia. Studios and clients Min has worked for include, Fox, *X-men*, *Wolverine*, Krome Studios, *Hellboy* and Prophecy Games.
Web: www.minart.net
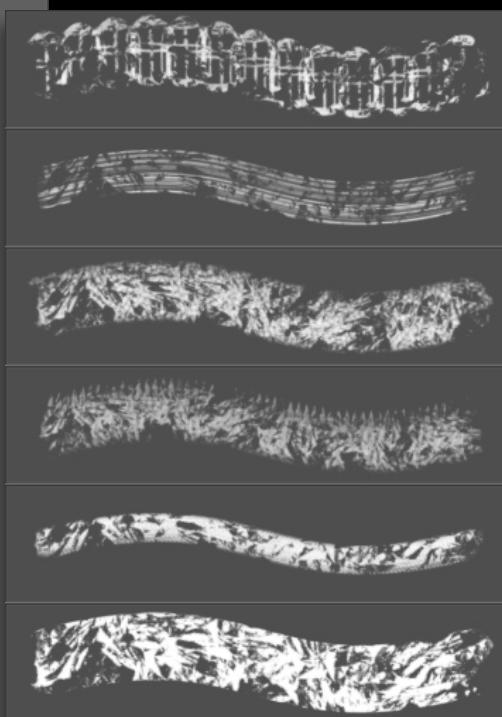
The Artist

Wanchana Intrasombat (Vic)
kun-victorior.com

Software Used:
Photoshop

Wanchana Intrasombat (Vic) is a 2D digital artist and co-founder of Studio Kun. He has worked as a concept artist, character designer and illustrator base in Bangkok, Thailand.

Create the cover!

Create a cover with a narrative

2dartist magazine has reached 100 issues! To celebrate this journey filled with fantasy and sci-fi, Wanchana Intrasombat (Vic) created this image on the theme of 100, and demonstrates techniques to paint and develop characters to present a narrative. ▶

Discover techniques for painting narrative covers in Photoshop

This illustration was designed for the theme of '100'. I had the initial concept and wanted to represent the story through the character. The story is about an old man who has spent his life with his lovely friend on an adventure.

The image is set 100 years into the adventure, after creating a lot of memories and visiting so many fantastic places: from Alice's wonderland, to the moon, to seeing Aladdin and the genie, and the land with the sword in the stone. Over the years, the character has collected many mementos, but still continues to journey into unseen places.

In this tutorial, you will see the process of the image's creation, with a focus on exploration and developing the character to represent the story being told.

01 **Sketching the character:** I already have a clear idea for the friend of the old man, so I just sketch a bit of him and spend my time concentrating on the old man instead, as he will be the main character that explains the story.

I want the illustration to show a little darkness around the edges, with the new light of the adventure showing across the character's face. Because of this, I focus on the character's expression and sketch out a number of different designs for the face proportion.

02 **Refining the characters:** I find a good character pose from some of my early design sketches and focus more on finding the detail and expression for the characters. I also spend time exploring the color as well.

This process helps me understand the personality of the character clearly and allows me to define the direction and mood before I start on the actual illustration. ▶

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01 Some sketches to explore the character

02 Refining the two personalities of the characters
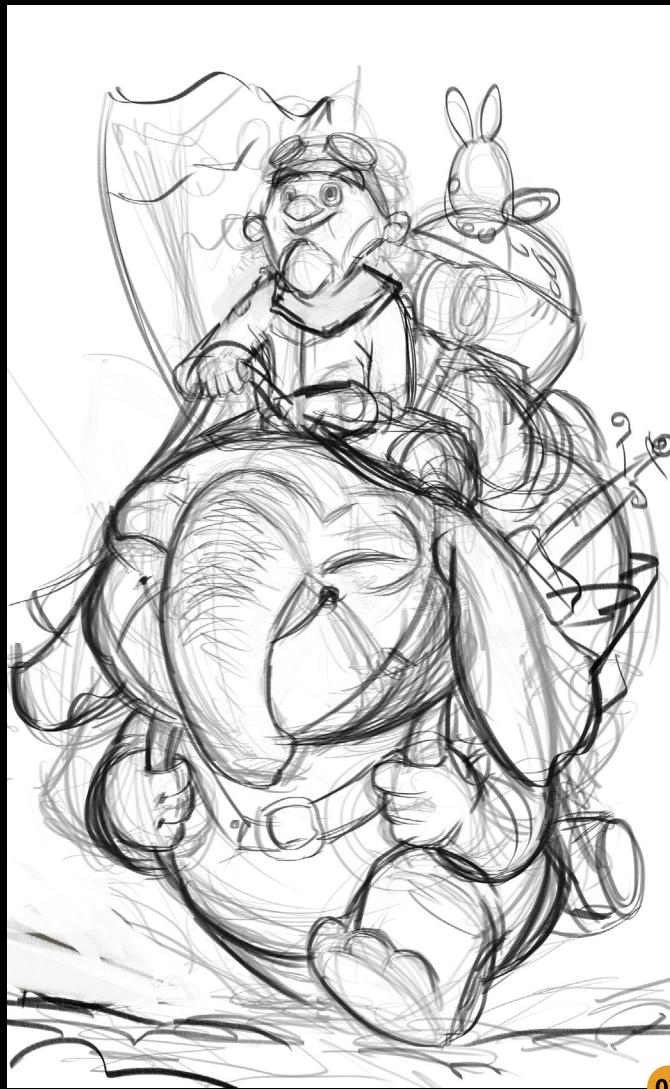
03 **Line sketching:** After I have the direction, characters and story detail, I now need to concentrate on the composition. As this image will be on a portrait canvas, I start with line sketching to find the balance between composition and story-telling.

04 **Color sketch:** This color sketch is an important element that allows me to control the atmosphere in the image.

I open another layer under the line sketch and begin adding some rough color to help define the lighting and shadow direction, and how the colors in the image interact.

05 **First step of coloring:** After I get a clear idea of the color scheme from the rough sketch, I open another layer for the base color of each object.

Now, I don't worry about the lighting or shadow, I just focus on filling in the base colors within the set lines from the line drawing. This will make the next step easy, as I can then color each part in a separate layer and easily control the lighting and shadow.

06 **Painting:** For the painting process, I start with lighting. From the base color, I pick out a lighter tone using the Color Pick tool, and start to manage the light in the image. I use the rough color sketch that I made in an earlier step to guide the direction of the lighting. ▶
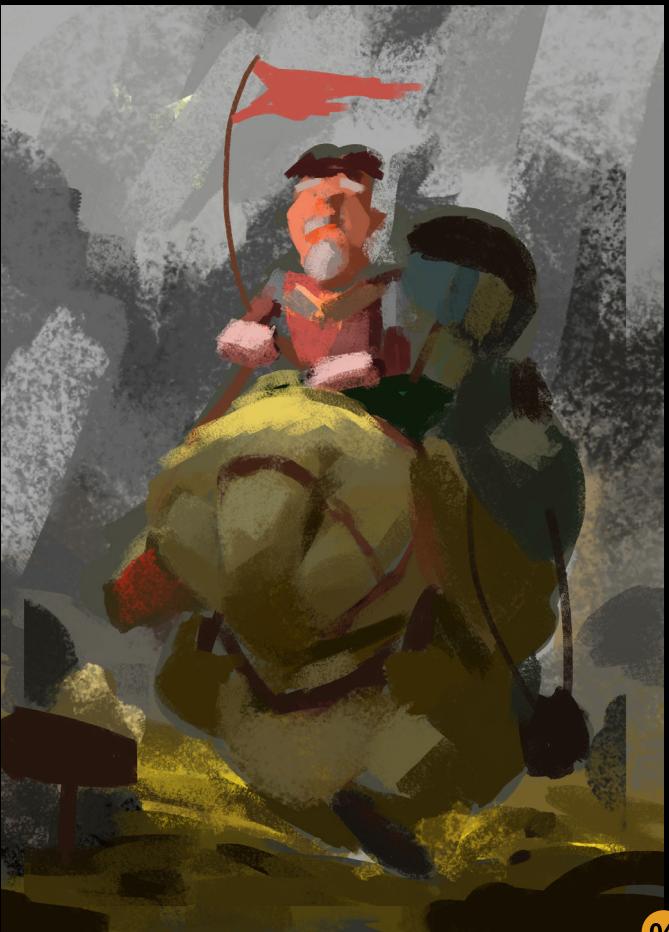
03 Starting with a rough line sketch then refining the detail

04 Sticking with a gray and green color palette to represent an old theme

05 Painting in the base color of each object, not too light/bright or dark

06 Adding highlights to the image

06

08

09

> "Sometimes, if I feel that the design of some part of the illustration isn't working, I will fix or modify it"

10

07 Adjustments: I don't always follow a strict process when painting. Sometimes, if I feel that the design of some part of the illustration isn't working, I will fix or modify it. I try to maintain the original idea to a greater extent though, and endeavor to stop any new ideas destroying my original scene.

You can see here that I change some designs on the character's costume.

08 Painting the detail: Painting in the detail usually takes the most time in the creation process. I continue refining the detail until I reach the quality I want.

All of the colors in the lighting and shadowed areas are taken from the original rough sketch, so I am still able to control the color palette.

09 Painting the background: After I finish the characters, I start on the background. To create this, I use a photo reference to guide my choices when setting the color tones.

I also focus on the depth of the illustration as I don't want the background to clash with the characters – contrast works well here.

10 Final detail: As this illustration is nearly finished, I spend some time focusing on adjusting the shadows and lighting.

I use two layers to help me: I use an Overlay layer to manage the lighting highlights, and the Multiply layer to help control the softer shadows without losing detail.

11 Final touches: For the final touches, I simply apply some of the special effect tools in Photoshop, such as Blur or Smart Sharpness. I decide to make the background a little blurrier to reduce the detail of the mountain and allow the viewer to focus on the character more clearly. ●

---

07 Making minor adjustments to the sketch

08 The quality of your painted detail is dependent on the time you spend on it

09 Depth helps the character pop out from the atmosphere

10 After adjusting the lighting and shadow, it's nearly finished

The Artist

Wanchana Intrasombat (Vic)
kun-victorior.com

Artist Portfolio

The Migration Begin
The concept is about the journey/ migration of the world, they are going to move to the new place and this scene was to show the miracle journey.

The Celebration of the Nature
This concept is about a welcome party for a new member of the nature family. They joined together to combine their powers to making the miraculous rainbow gift for the 10th member of the nature.

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52 pages of tutorials inside!

100 top industry tips

The world's top digital painters reveal new theories, techniques and inspiration to make you a better artist

Design new world concepts

Discover industry techniques for painting and presenting environment concepts in Photoshop

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Victor Mosquera demonstrates how to use silhouettes to speed up your painting

Master the art of **caricature creation**

Create a cover with **a narrative**

Wanchana Intrasombat (Vic) illustrates and documents the creation of this month's captivating cover

+plus

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Design new world concepts

Markus Lovadina leads you through a step-by-step tutorial simulating a studio Environment. Learn how to interpret a brief and pick up useful techniques on creating and presenting an environment concept for a film or game. ▶

The Artist

Markus Lovadina
malosart.blogspot.co.uk

Software Used:
Photoshop

Markus Lovadina (malo)
is a Senior Concept Artist
at Rocksteady Studios
Ltd, as well as a freelance
Concept Artist/Illustrator.
Over recent years he's had
the opportunity to work for
companies such as Acclaim
Entertainment, Activision and
Intel. He has also worked on
movie projects and a variety
of book covers too.

Discover useful techniques for painting environment concepts in Photoshop

For this tutorial you'll have to imagine a studio-like environment. We'll work though receiving a brief from an Art Director and how to provide a series of steps for approval or important feedback loops. I will also show how to pitch your idea to the Art Director at the very end.

The brief: The defining features of this world are centered on the fact that it's an unstable and volcanic environment, with frequent eruptions and earthquakes. The earth/soil/land is very fertile and the plants have adapted to flourish here. The gravity is very high and this means structures and life in general looks squat and strong; these characteristics are echoed throughout everything living (or built) thing on this world. They all look as though they are made to fight the battle against the unstable and powerful nature of the world.

Plants and vines which are rich in flowers and fruit quickly flourish soon after earthquakes; but then it's never long before a volcano erupts and destroys things, leaving charred, skeletal ruins of buildings, trees and vines. But the world quickly fights back: the remains are soon covered with new plant life. And this is what is very important: you should always be able to see the old burnt skeletons of everything lost – buildings, trees etc - that are recovered with new life. There is a complete contrast between these states - think stark images of life and death together. As the layers of ruins and new growth build up the world starts to grow taller, even with the higher gravity.

01 **Getting ready:** If you have to create a world that has never been seen before, it's always a good idea to start with some research. The research could involve browsing the web, reading books or simply browsing your image and pictures libraries. The most important part of research for me, is to get into the right mood and find elements that are absolutely believable. After you've collected a variety of images that capture the mood, look, colors and structures, it's time to put all those images onto a mood board.

The mood board could be a simple Photoshop document or a piece of cardboard that you stick an image to. The most important thing about a mood board is that you always have access to
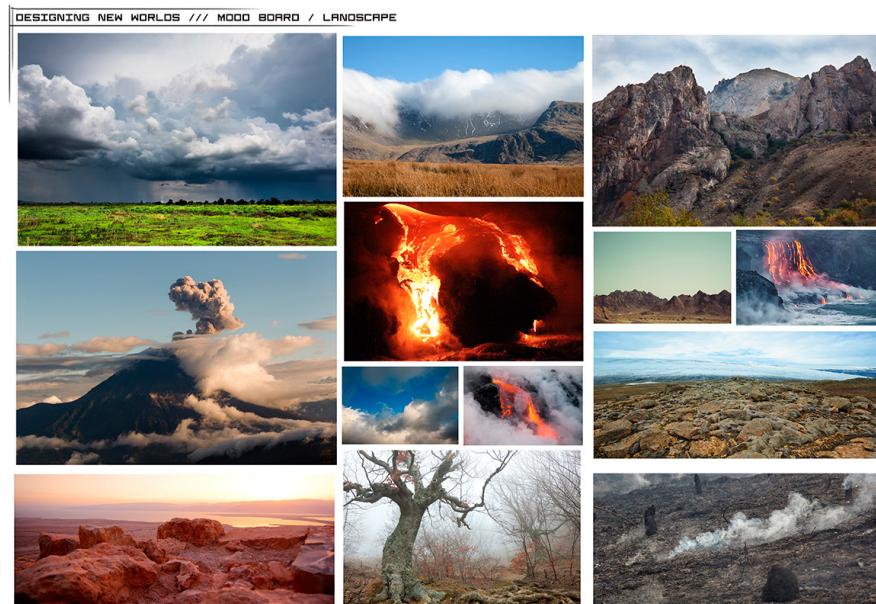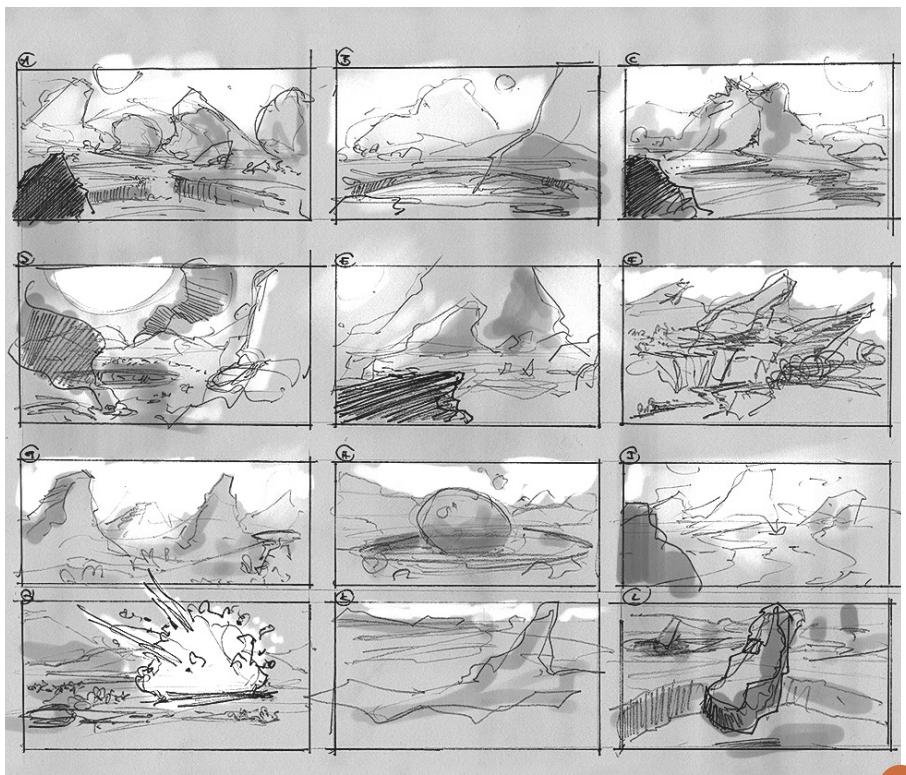
it. The images on my mood board aren't placed in any defined order or have any particular arrangement, they just give me an overview and keep me in the mood to create a consistent world.

On top of that, you always could use the images as textures or structures for your upcoming painting. But be sure to use only license-free images or pictures you've taken yourself.

02 **Thumbnail sketches:** Creating new worlds is always a fun, but challenging, task - you really have to take care about the believability, scaling, mood, look and feel and

many more attributes. It's also important that the audience or in this case, your Art Director, gets everything in a glance.

To get the ball rolling, I start with some pretty loose thumbnail sketches. I make the sketches with a simple mechanical pencil and bring them into Photoshop later on to tweak the values of the sketches.

After the sketches are done, it's a good time to talk to your Art Director and discuss the basic ideas before heading off to the final sketch.

03 **Final sketch:** The final sketch is still pretty rough because the main focus is on composition and ordering all relevant things.

There are many ways to get to your final sketch - one could be to copy and paste elements from your pencil sketches into your Photoshop document or just start from scratch in Photoshop. I make this sketch entirely in Photoshop, so I can use it as base for the upcoming illustration.

I also use different values to get a feel of the depth, scale and lightning. And again, this sketch could go to the Art Director for the final go ahead.

04 **Customized brushes and shapes:** I really love to work with customized brushes and shapes. Both of these speed up the entire painting progress and you'll get some pretty cool details without working hours to achieve the same effect.

The good thing about shapes is that these are vector-based, which means no loss while scaling the shapes - the brushes and shapes are simply made using black and white images, and you can tweak their properties to create a variety of different effects. Finding or making the right brush/shape will take a bit of time, but will definitely pay out at the end. I'd recommend that you allocate a bit of your spare time to finding the best settings for your self-made brushes. It's absolutely worth the time!

For the new world concept I use mostly rock and leaf brushes to get some decent structures for the rocks and some believable foliage for the woods on the planet.

CUSTOMIZED BRUSHES

CUSTOMIZED SHAPES

05 **Painting the sky:** The way I start an image differs from painting to painting and also depends on my mood – I could create some rough color blockings or reuse some of my older images. In this case, after the concept was roughly set and approved, I decide to start with a solid blue-ish background.

I then start to paint in the sky using a customized brush - a simple rough square brush with a texture and set to Transparent mode. The most important part here is to define the look of the sky, as it will define the mood for the painting later on. Depending on the sky and light qualities, the colors will change dramatically; therefore it's a good idea to spend a fair amount of time on the sky and in setting the overall mood. ▶

---

01 The selection of images, or mood board, that will guide my ideas

02 A series of thumbnail sketches inspired by the mood board

03 The final sketch created in Photoshop

04 Some of the customized brushes and shapes used in this project

05 Painting the sky using a square-shaped custom brush

> **"I also try to keep as many elements as possible on different layers - this allows me to go back and forth while painting the scene and get rid of elements that I don't like"**

06 **Painting the ground:** When the sky is roughly set, I begin to block in the ground using the same brush as I used for the sky. I use the Color Picker and changed the colors slightly to get a different range of tones.

For the ground I have a look at my mood board and pick some colors from there to get the right palette for my painting. If you have a mood board, try to use it as often you can as it will guide you in choosing natural-looking colors and makes the overall look more believable.

To get some structure I use my customized shapes. Shapes appear always on a new separate layer and if you want to modify the shape, you have to render that layer. I also try to keep as many elements as possible on different layers - this allows me to go back and forth while painting the scene and get rid of elements I don't like. It also allows me to play with different layer effects.

07 **Painting the background:** I use darker blue values to paint the mountains in the far distance. I also paint them on a separate layer with the same brush as sued for the ground. The most important thing to keep right here are the values. BG = brightest -> FG = darkest

I add more shapes with Soft Light layers for the additional structures on the ground.

08 **First details:** Now it's time to bring in more rocks and mountains to match the original sketch. I pick some of the reference images from my mood board to add a little structure on the ground. The image is pasted into the composition on a new layer. Then I start to play around with the scaling, the Transparent mode and layer effects until I'm happy with the look. Now back to rocks and mountains…

Using the Selection tool, I start to draw in the rough shapes of the mountains and rocks. I then fill the selection, with the same brush I used before, with colors from the previous rocks. I just slightly tweak them with darker values to give a feeling of distance to the scene.

To get some structure I create a new layer (still in Selection mode), pick some colors from the ground and paint in rough strokes. On the same layer, just with the original color, I paint over the

brush strokes. This won't give highly detailed structures, but will let the mind read 'rock'.

09 **More details:** I go through the brief again, just to make sure I'm heading into the right direction. 'Unstable and volcanic environment' are the key points that pop out at me, so I decide to paint in some more volcanic-rocks in the foreground of the scene.

> "Clouds are always fun to paint. I really like the variety in their structure and the sift/ hard blending they have"

Again, using the Selection tool, I paint in a sort of river bed. This will be filled later on with lava and a lot of dust to create the right mood. I repaint the shape of the rock on the left side (background) to make it fit to the rest of the scene. The foreground rock is roughly blocked in using the same brush and on a newly created layer.

For a better sense of scale, I also paint in some deep hanging clouds. Clouds are always fun to paint. I really like the variety in their structure and the sift/hard blending they have. The clouds are also painted on a new layer. For clouds I use a lot of customized brushes for the Smudge tool. The brush is mostly structural and not really controllable, which gives some natural feeling to it – so for clouds, haze and fog I really recommend using the Smudge tool. This tool creates happy accidents and allows you to blur boundaries and soft blend between different values.

10 **The foreground:** To create the structure on the foreground rock I go back to my mood board and pick a reference with some great rock textures. I paste the texture in, duplicate it a couple of times and rearrange it until I'm happy with the shape. I then select the newly created shape, create a new layer below and fill the selection with rough brush strokes.

Back to the shape layer, I play around with layer effects (Soft Light) and Transparent mode until I get a good amount of texture. To get a more painterly feeling, I create a new layer on top of it and paint over some areas with loose strokes. For the lava I use the same selection-paint-technique. ▶

06 Using custom shapes to paint in the ground texture in the scene

07 Using darker values for the mountains in the distance

08 Bringing in more rocks and mountains to add detail to the scene

09 Refining some of the details in the landscape and sky

10 Adding volcanic elements such as lava

11 **Feedback from the Art Director:** It was now time to show this draft to the Art Director and to get some proper feedback. During the meeting, we decide that the landscape needs some tweaks here and there. One of the biggest suggestions is to add huge foreground elements - firstly to add a second layer of depth to it and also to add some storytelling elements.

After the meeting I go back to my 'drawing board' and start with some rough block-ins for the foreground elements. I already know that it will be a big stone structure with a couple of trees and a rundown building. The building should suggest that it was once a lovely home before the last gigantic eruption happened.

The elements are painted on a newly created layer, which gives me the highest flexibility to bounce back and forth. Stones, trees and grass are all made with customized brushes and shapes. It's also a good way to paint under a semi transparent brush stroke (e.g. stone as seen at the very beginning). This gives some additional depth and structure to the stone surface.

I'm happy with the result so far, so now it's time to bring in the 'volcanic' mood. And what better way to do this than by adding smoke, fog and fire?

I make the big smoke trail the same way as I made the cloud, but this time I duplicate the cloud (that's why I love to keep most of my elements on separate layers) and use the Deformation tool. I duplicated the layer, Transform it again, and merge those layers together. I then paint over some areas that appeared duplicated and blend the rough brush strokes with the Smudge tool. On top of this, I add some smaller clouds to the background.

12 **The rundown house:** The next step is to create the abandoned and rundown house. I block in some simple shapes with the round Brush tool. After that I use the Selection tool and paint in rough strokes with a textured brush to define certain areas. The leaves are done using a leaf-shaped brush set to Color Dynamics.

My next step is to create a new layer and make a couple of orange Soft Radial Gradients. The gradients are placed over the lava streams and set to Soft Light to give the impression of heat. The small lava streams in the far background are painted in using a small round brush. They don't have to be accurate, just have enough indicators to give a feel for the texture. The rest will happen in the viewer's mind as they imagine the scene.
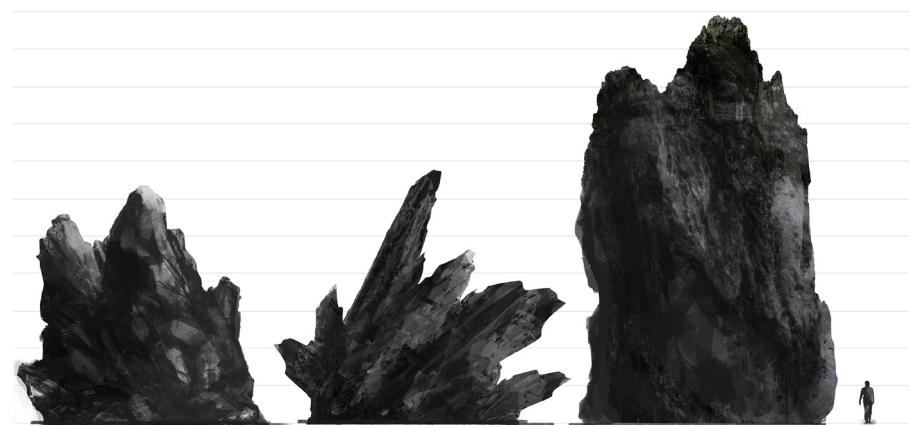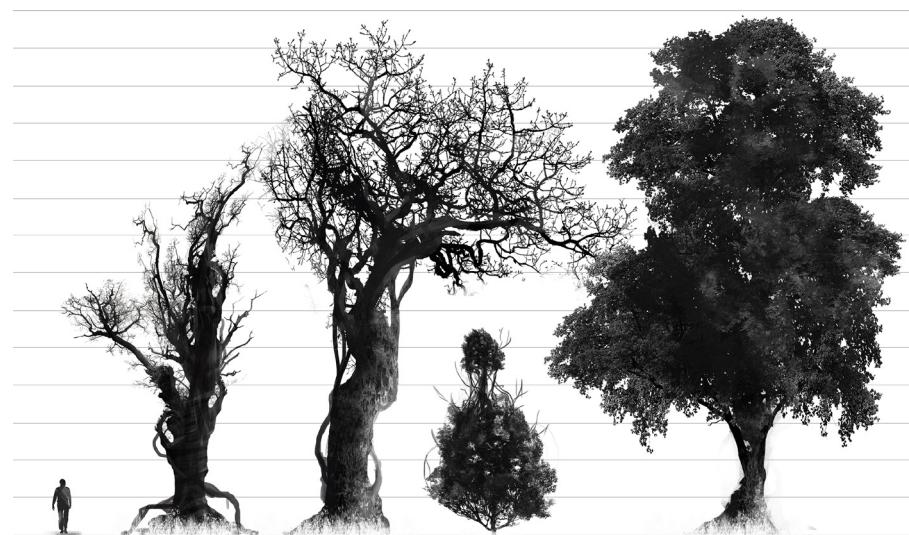
13 **Final touches:** Time for the final adjustments. The big planet in the sky is a simple huge round brush 'dot' and the structure is simply erased with a huge structural brush. Before I erase the structure from the big planet though, I duplicate the layer, and scale it down to the size of a second, more distant planet. This small plane is duplicated again and I add a Motion Blur and Gaussian Blur filter to it.

Finally I add a photo filter, hue/saturation, and color balance filter on top of the entire image. As a final step, I merge all layers together and add a sharpening filter to the entire painting as well.

Now the concept is done, it's time to pitch the new look to the Art Director. When pitching a concept, it always a good approach to tell him the story behind your image, the ideas you had while creating it and maybe some further possibilities as well. I'm really not a big fan of thousands of words though - for me images speak more than words. If you captured the right feeling and people are able to interpret their own story from an image, I think you've made a good job of it.

Its also a good idea is to create some sort of style or scale sheet, to give the Art Director a feeling of the size of the world you just have created. This could be made with trees and rocks that feature in your scene, as seen in these images here

Good luck! ●

11 Adding in the smoke fire and fog to create a more volcanic scene

**12** Adding the run down house and color filters to finish the scene

13 Trees and rocks set out in a scale sheet for the Art Director

The Artist

Cosmin Podar
cosminpodar.blogspot.ro

Software Used:
Photoshop

Cosmin Podar is currently employed as a full-time lead concept artist. In his spare time, he likes to create caricatures and take on other concept-related freelance jobs.
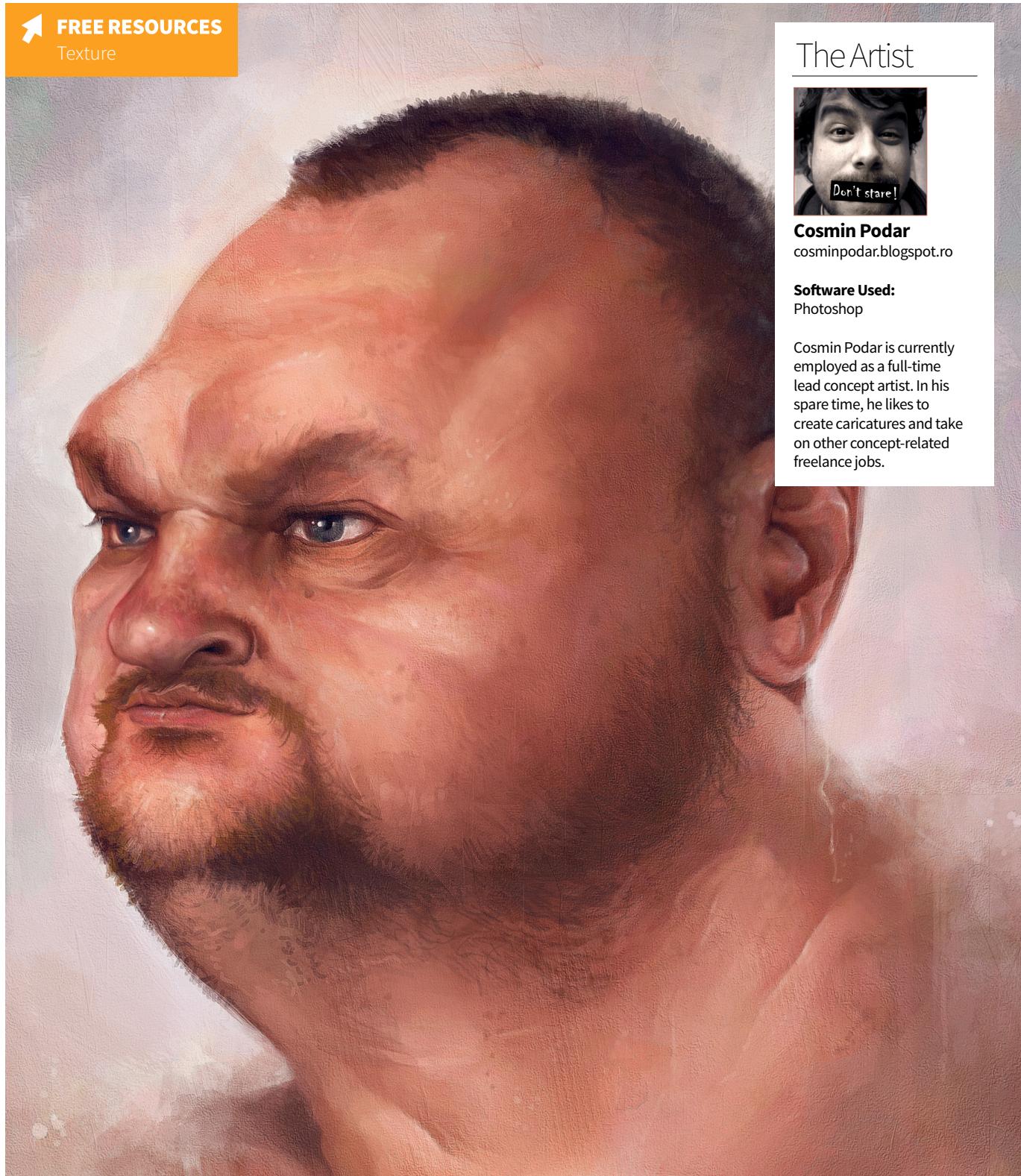
Master the art of caricature creation

Cosmin Podar shares his personal process of painting caricatures, by demonstrating the use of references (provided by **www.3d.sk**) and thumbnails to make the character more recognizable, as well as techniques to make your own simple textures in Photoshop. ▶

Learn top tips and techniques for painting caricatures from an industry professional...

This tutorial will show you how to create a caricature from scratch in fifteen steps. It will cover how to use references and thumbnails to make the character more recognizable, how to use standard brushes and how to make your own simple textures in Photoshop to add your own flavor to the painting.

After I choose my references, I first create as many thumbnails as I can until I get the expression that I want. Then I make a small basic color palette and start blocking in big shapes of color. After defining the shapes with light and shadow, I start refining the painting until I reach the desired look. Then I apply the finishing touches (textures and some small effects) to give it that painterly flavor.

In this tutorial, I use Photoshop and all the sketches and paintings are done digitally using a Wacom Intuos 4 medium tablet. The resolution of this image is 4949 x 6428 pixels at 300dpi. I use this kind of resolution because the details are much sharper, and you never know when you might need to print the final image for a client or exhibition.

> "It is very important not to stick with the first one that you do, even if you think this is the best you can achieve – there are always better sketches"

01 **Thumbnail sketching:** As outlined in the introduction, the first thing I do is draft out a few thumbnail sketches. These sketches should take a maximum of ten minutes each and I do as many as I can to help study the anatomy of the face and character.

It is very important not to stick with the first one that you do, even if you think this is the best you can achieve – there are always better sketches. Usually, after my fifth or sixth iteration, I achieve the distortion that I like most and then make some rough 360-degree sketches.

01 Thumbnail sketches are done to study the anatomy and structure of the subject's head

02 The final line art sketch

01
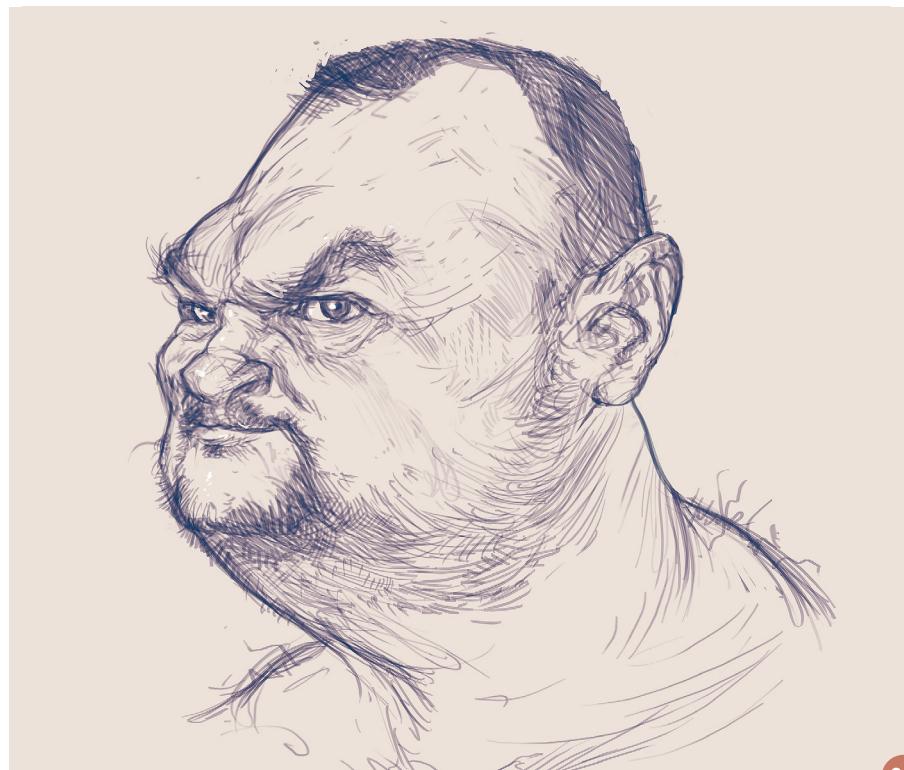
02

⚡ PRO TIPS

Studying anatomy

During the reference research stage, I also look at other caricaturists' approaches to the same subject (if caricaturing a famous person, for example). This is the easiest way to know what has already been made and will avoid you accidentally repeating a concept.

Color

In school, I always hated color because it was hard and I didn't understand the theory. After some years, I finally gained the courage to use it by learning from tutorials, books and tips from professional artists.

I found that it's good practice to paint only the black and white values first, because the human eye sees mostly in contrast. After that, color will be easier to apply. A very useful tip from the outstanding painter Marco Bucci, is that shadow is the best excuse for a painter to put in a diverse range of color.

02 **Final line art sketch:** After the thumbnail sketches are done, I decide whether to stick with one of the thumbnails or start another new one (keeping in mind things I have discovered during the sketching process).

I choose one of the thumbnails but flip it vertically and make a quick line sketch of the guy, but this time, put more effort into searching for forms and shapes, trying to achieve the likeness and character that I want. ▶

03 Certain guidelines help the caricature become more recognizable

04 A Mask layer is used to allow us better control over the brush strokes

**05** The basic monochromatic light and shadow distribution on the face

03 **Feature guidelines:** When I studied caricature art in school and from other great caricature artist's tutorials, I noted that there are some useful template guidelines that need to be followed so that the likeness is achieved. In using this, even if the image is not a one-hundred-percent proportional match, you can recognize the person from the caricature.

I take some of these guidelines and apply them to my caricature. As you can see, the features of the face have to be in complete harmony with each other, even when exaggerated. This is so that the viewer's impression will correlate with the actual portrait of your subject.

04 **Masking:** This step is quite easy. This is just a mask I create that allows me to paint colors, lights and shadows within the caricature without disturbing the background.

It's very easy to create a mask; just take the Lasso tool and follow the outer line of your caricature until you reach the initial starting point. After that, just fill the layer in with a basic color (right-click and select Fill). When I want it active, I can just Ctrl+left-click on the thumbnail in the Layer window.

05 **First light and shadow pass:** After the mask is done, I add a reddish tone to the sketch. To do this, select the sketch and press Ctrl+U to open the Hue/Saturation window. Then click the colorize button and adjust the sliders to achieve the color you want.
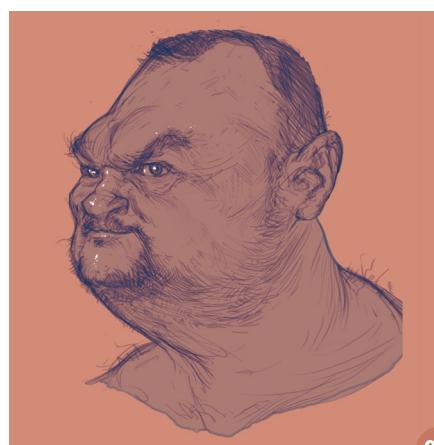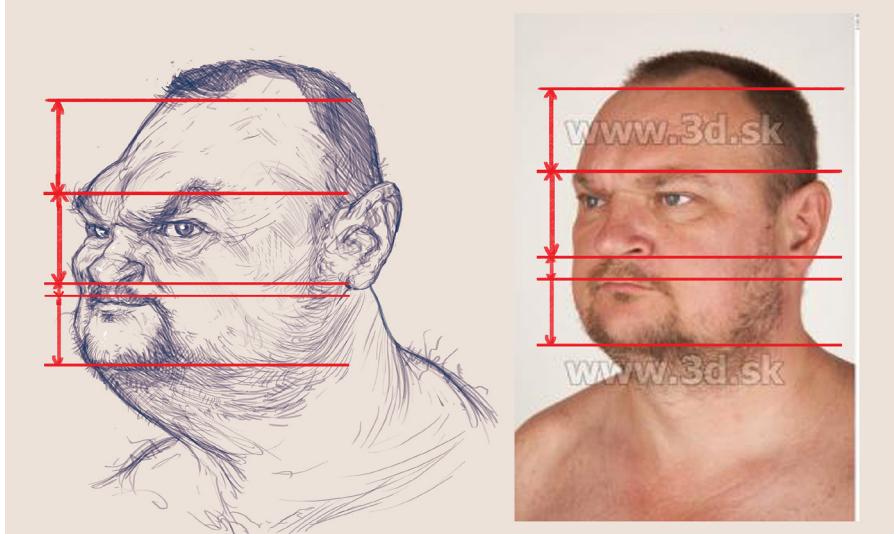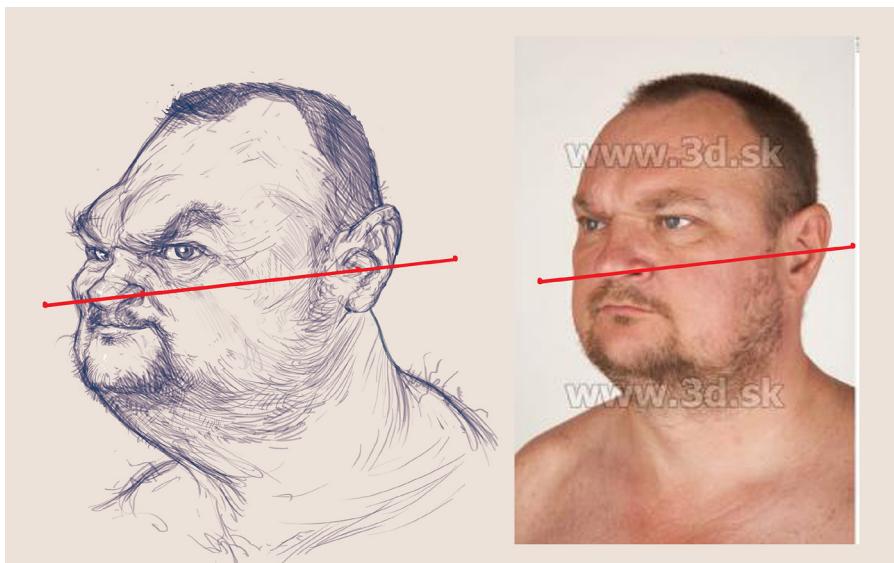
References used with permission from **www.3d.sk**

03

04

I create a new layer above it, set it to Multiply with an Opacity of 70%, and then start to fill in some basic shadows with the color of the background.

After I finish the shadows, I make another layer on top and set it to Soft Light with an Opacity of 75%. I then select a white color and add general lights. ▶
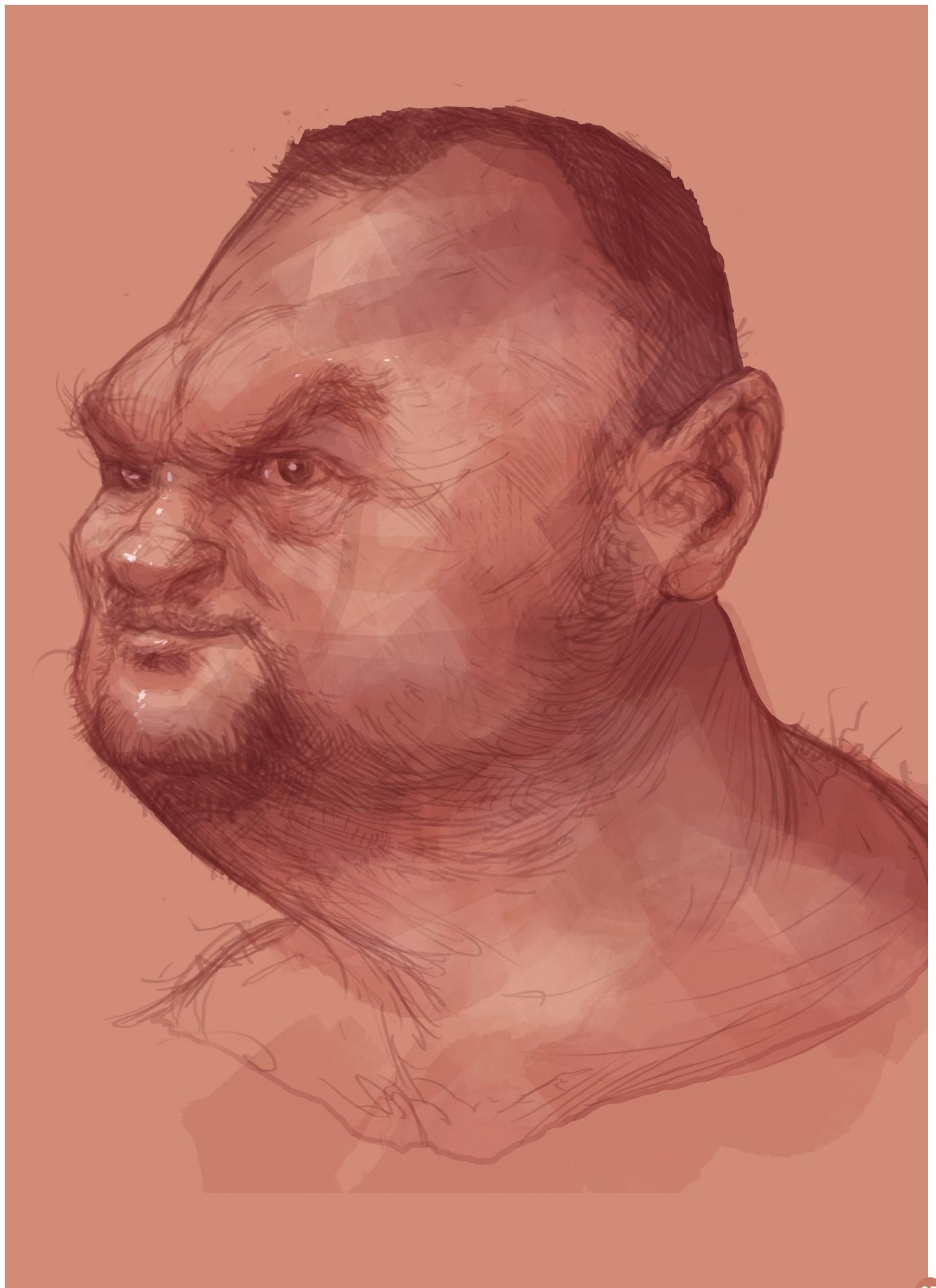
06 **Color palette:** I make a color palette that contains the colors I need to start blocking in my painting. In terms of the palette, I want to create a cool/warm contrast between the subject and the background. This arrangement will depend on the painting that you want to do, the contrast of colors you prefer, or as in my case, how the subject inspires you to paint him.

I select some pinks, oranges, yellows and browns for the face and some blues for the background. I set all of them in a monochromatic scale, for example, from dark-blue to light-blue.

07 **First color batch:** For the first color batch, I quickly establish the darker tones without taking any details into consideration. I zoom out to see the entire painting here, as there is no need to focus on any details at this point. At first the painting might look a bit dull and ugly, but as we begin adding middle and lighter tones later, your image will begin to come to life.

08 **Second color batch:** The second batch of color is practically the same thing as the first one; I just put in some middle tones too. In addition, I also begin to consider the anatomy of the subject, and slowly try to add in the details to accentuate the likeness of the person.

I am still working zoomed out, as I'm not focusing on details. You should use big brushes to cover more ground at this point, and work with increasingly smaller brushes as the painting
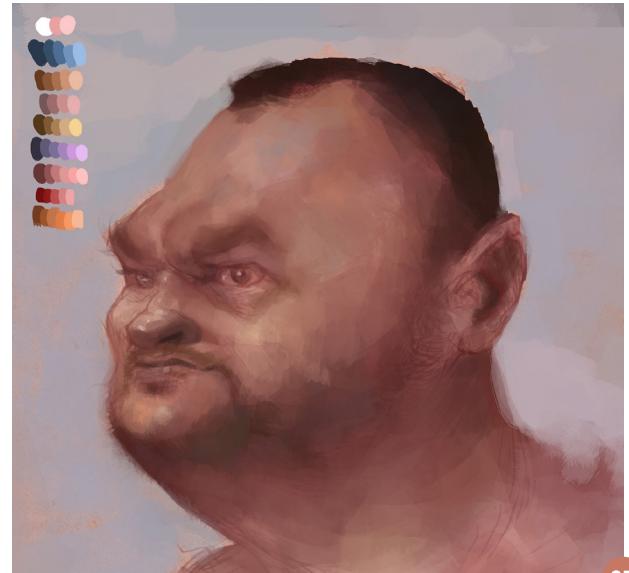

progresses. The brush that I use is the Standard 56 brush from the natural brushes set that comes standard with Photoshop.

09 **Refining the likeness:** Using the same Standard 56 brush, I begin to accurately define the shapes and features of the face. This process can be slow to start but after some time and a lot of practice the rendering will become easier. The hard part is to get the likeness right.

For this process, I always keep the flow at 100% and only play with the Opacity settings. I'll often use 20% Opacity in order to create smoother transitions and strokes in the painting.
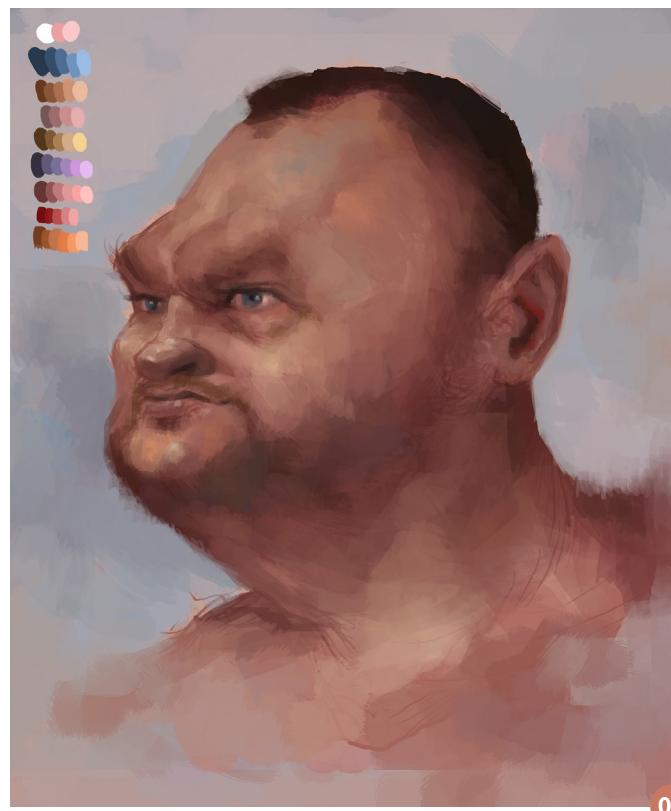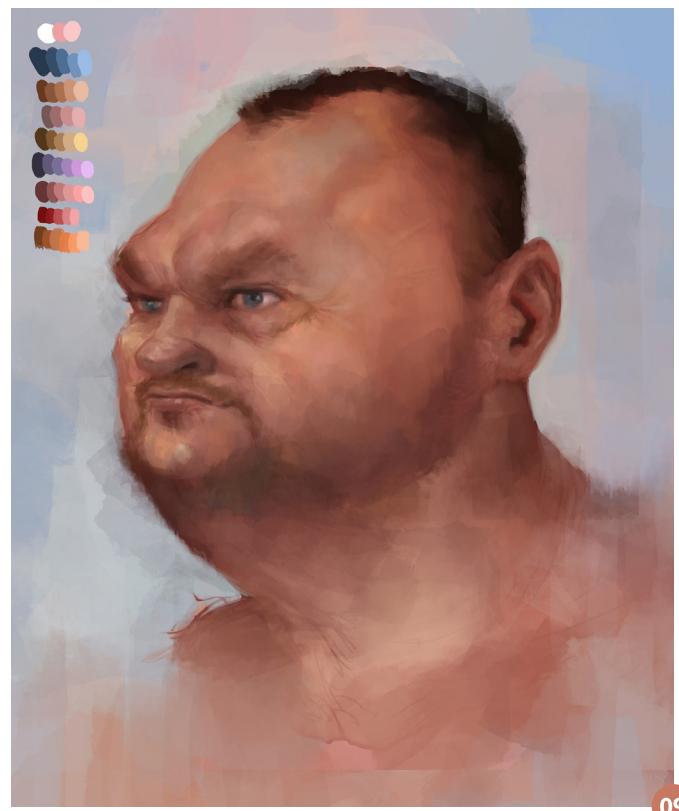
10 **Using the Liquify tool:** I use the Liquify tool when refining the likeness to help me get good results quickly. This tool is not used by every artist, so I'd encourage new artists to practice their general painting skills first. This will enrich your techniques and help you become faster and better, because you'll understand the form when it comes to painting it. You can find this tool in the menu bar, in the Filter section.

11 **Lights and details:** This follows the same process as before. I add more details and give the shapes more form using lighter tones. I also define the shadows so the transitions are much smoother.
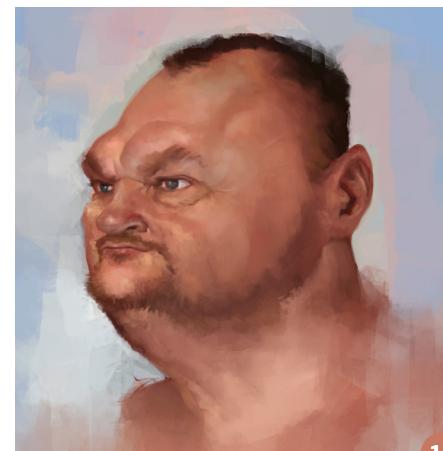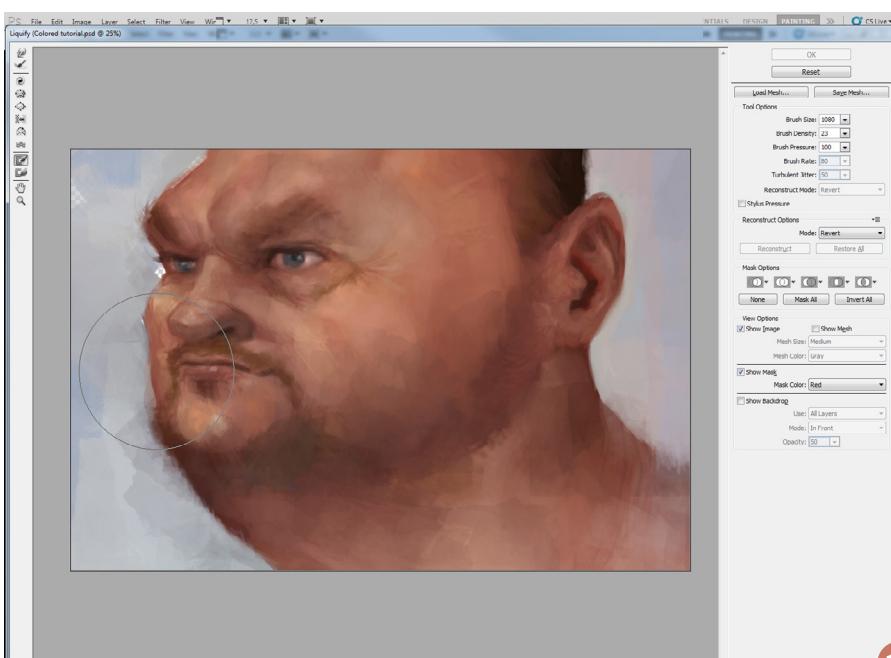
This build up of detail takes time and patience, but it's also the most fun and rewarding part of the painting for me. You also have to be aware of your color choices so that the final piece has that harmony you envisioned at the start.

12 Refining the background: The time has come to refine the background a bit more. I use the same standard brush as before, because I don't want to depend on a specific textured brush to do my work for me.

I always prefer a more painterly look, but with this I try to push it further to a smoother, more finished render. I don't apply this on the background though - I like the background to mimic the traditional style of painting as much as it can by using rough strokes and sometimes even fake drips to look like natural paint effects. ▶

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06 The color palette used in the image

07 The first batch of basic color added figure in the the painting

08 The second color batch injects life into the painting as the shapes begin to match the character

09 Adding detail and refining the likeness

10 A bit of sculpting using the Liquify tool

11 Adding more details using lighter tones and refining the likeness

12 Giving a traditional look to the background of the painting
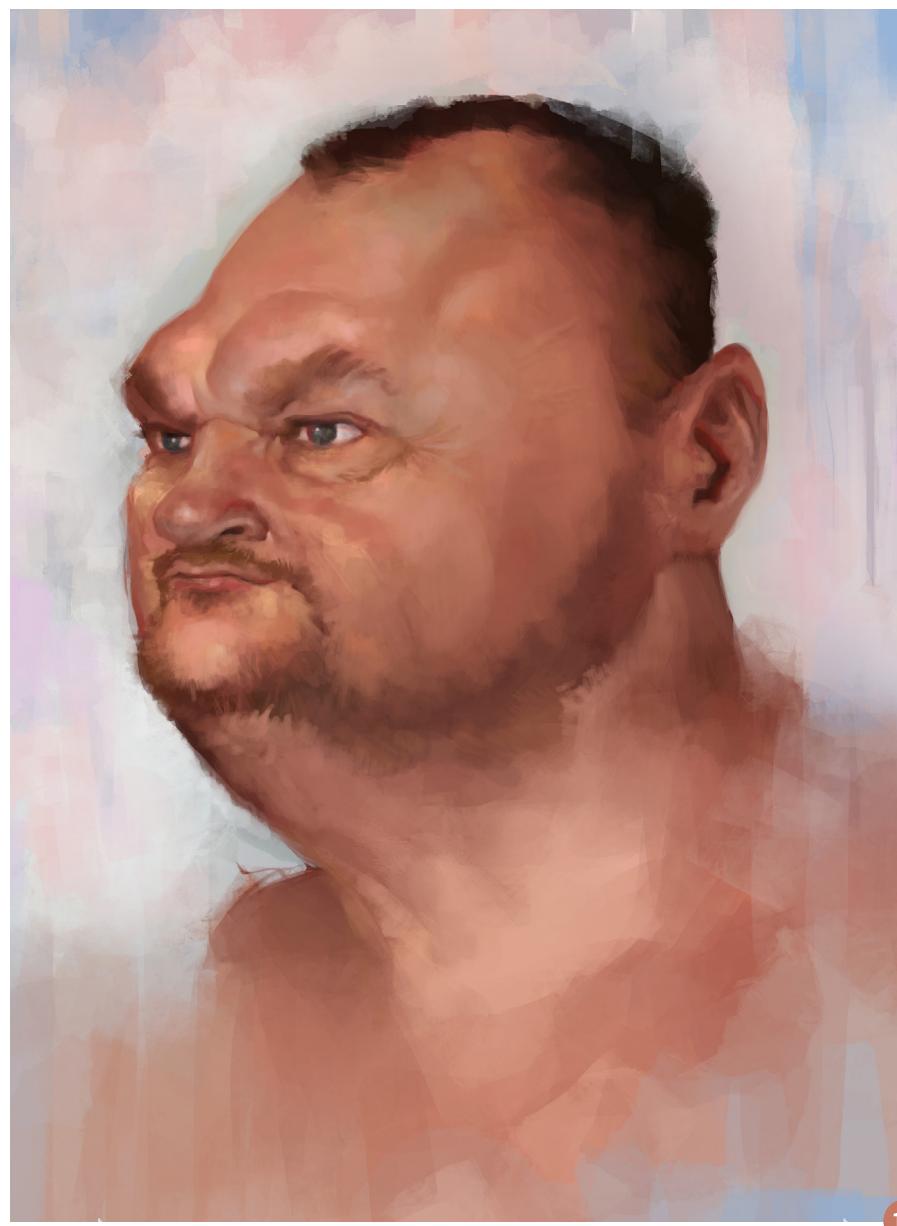
⚡ PRO TIP
Originality and style

This is perhaps one of the most delicate subjects in the art world. I don't want to get too deep into it here, but it can be very hard to be original and create a style when there are so many artists out there.

Try to study from them, rather than copy them, and listen to your own artistic instincts. Study from nature too, and keep an eye out for artists that you like and draw or paint from the soul. There is no right or wrong here, there is only progress.

13 The last steps before the final piece is done

14 The canvas texture created with simple brushes

15 The final piece: Arnie Bass in full bulldog splendor

13 **Cleaning up and adding details:** This is the final polish to the general shapes and features of the subject. I strongly recommend that beginners work consistently on each part of the painting, as focusing on one area tends to take forever until you find the finished look.

At this point I work zoomed in almost 90% of the time. It's a good idea to keep the big picture in mind though – I always keep a double window open or use the navigator to refer to.

14 **Making a canvas texture:** For this texture I use a white canvas with a high resolution and three standard brushes: the round hard brush, the standard 56 brush, and the no. 29 brush from the Dry Media set. I paint black lines, points and scratches to mimic a cracked concrete texture. I don't fill the whole blank page though, because the effect won't work as well.

After I create the texture, I go into the Filter section, select Stylize and then Emboss. In the small window that appears, I tweak the bars to adjust the thickness of the crevices. I then drag the texture on top of the painting and set the layer to Soft Light 75%.

**15** **Final touches and detail refinement:** After a few final touches, this tutorial
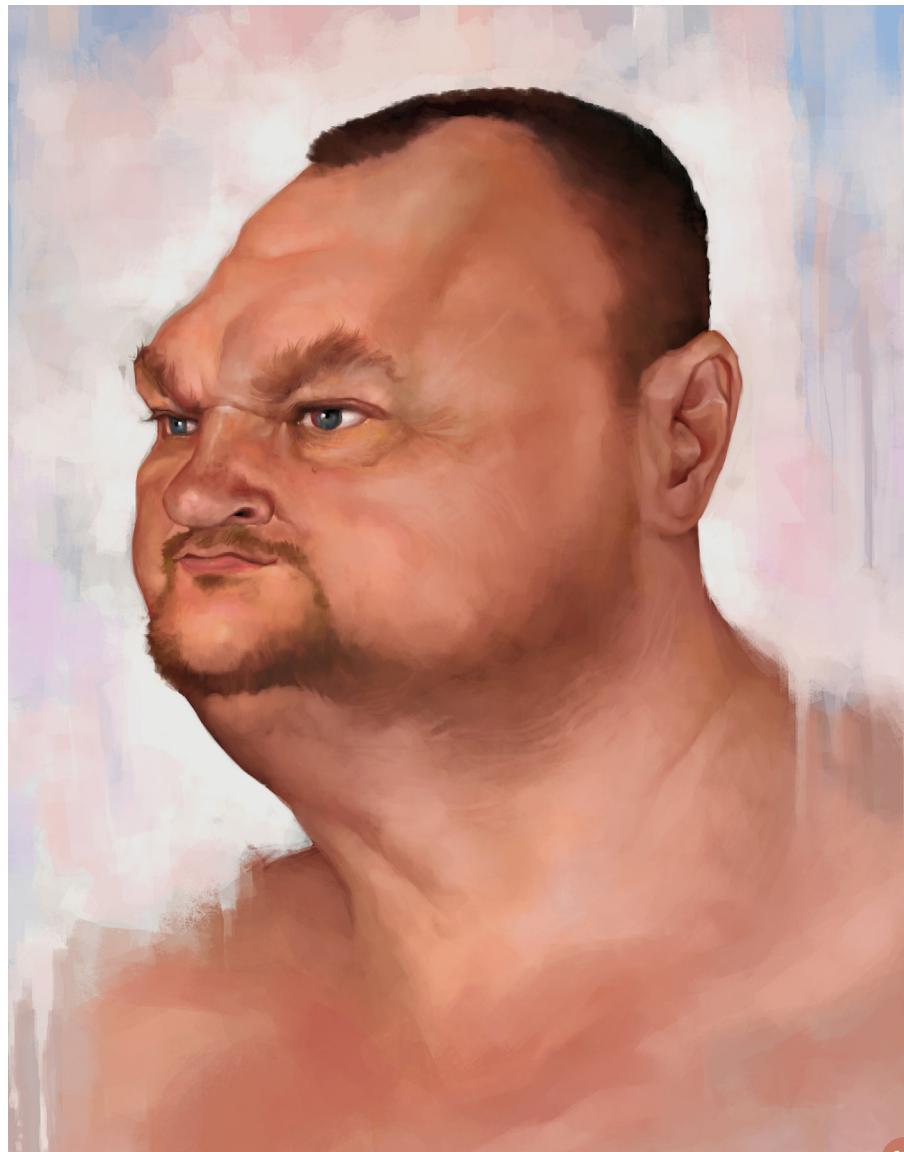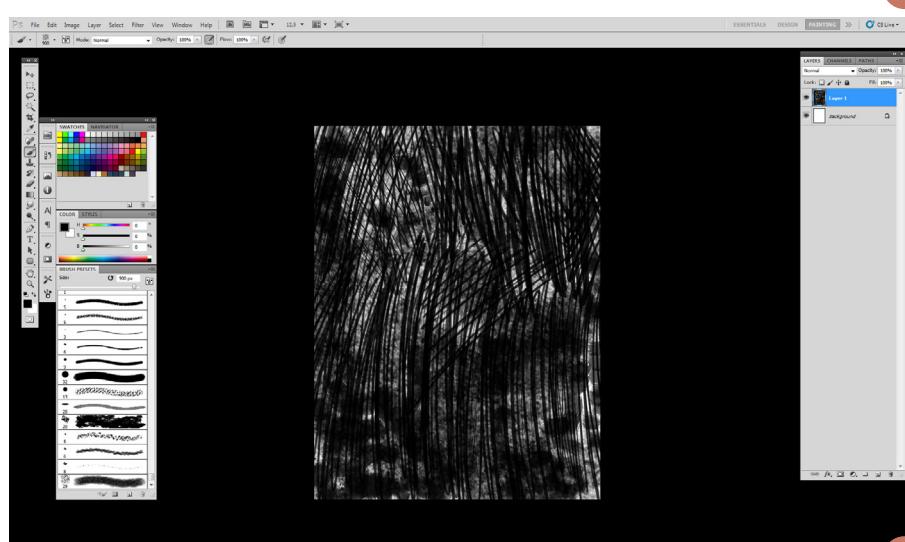
comes to an end. For me, the last fifteen-percent of the work takes almost half the amount of time as the previous steps – being careful with details, adding highlights, deciding where to put detail or leave it loose, and of course color-tweaking.

I hope you enjoyed this tutorial, I know I had a lot of fun and I also learned new things. Don't forget to study hard, never give up and try to have fun doing it! ●
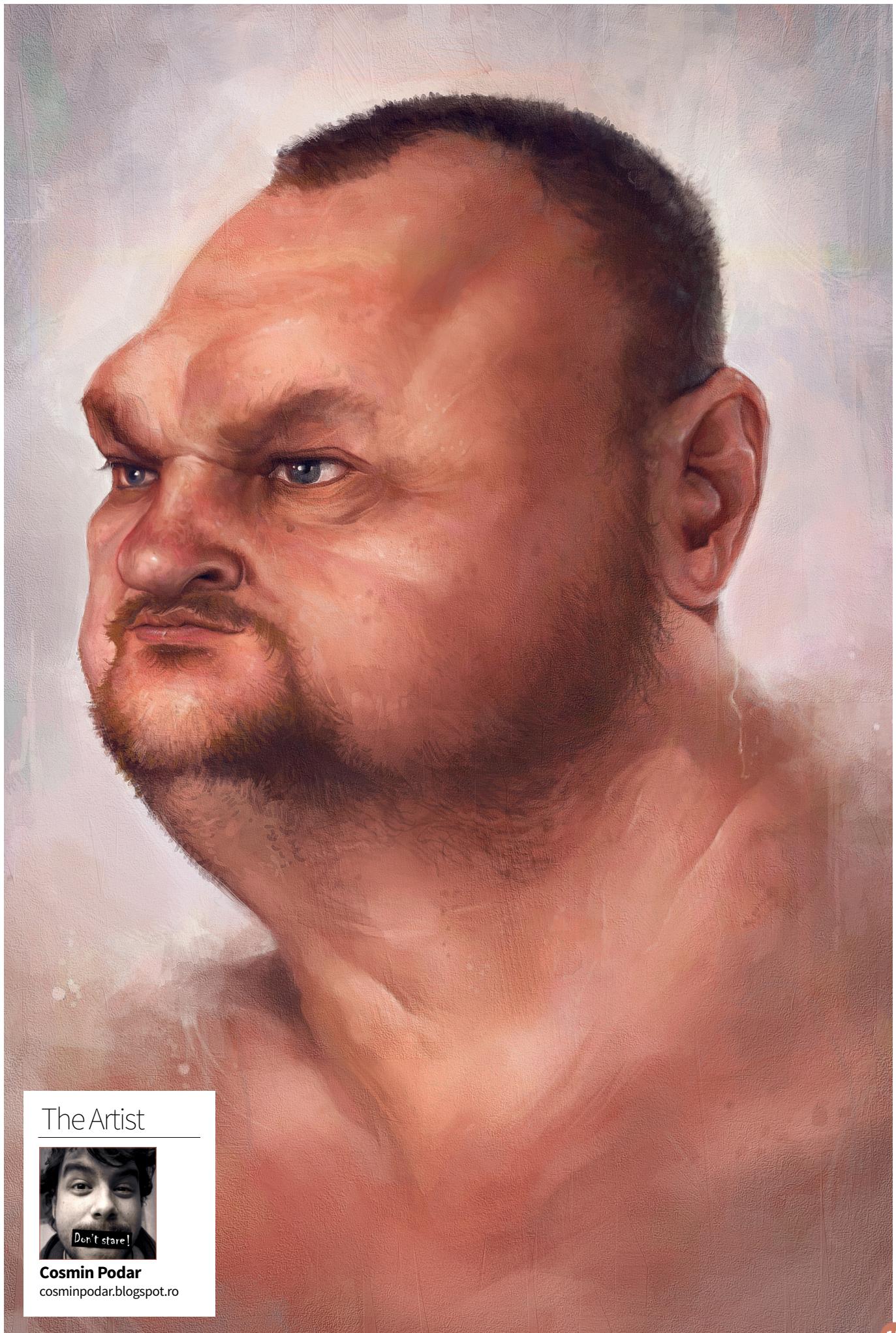
The Artist

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The Artist

Victor Mosquera
victormosquera.com

Software Used:
Photoshop CC

Victor Mosquera is a Colombian concept artist living in Toronto, Canada and currently working at Ubisoft Toronto. His previous clients include companies such as Volta, Tor.com and One pixel Brush.

Speed painting with silhouettes

Being able to get down an idea or concept at lightning speed is a great tool for any artist to master. Concept artist Victor Mosquera demonstrates the technique of speed painting using silhouettes and gradients. ▶

Use silhouettes and gradient fills to hone your speed painting skills...

Lately I've been experimenting with a more stylized rendering, so this is the perfect opportunity for me to talk about the way I approach art nowadays. I appreciate simpler and classy compositions/designs over the images saturated by a million elements.

Having that in mind, my goal for this image was to create a scene with the fewest and simplest shapes, but at the same time make it look fairly real and believable. The way to achieve this was to have a solid and clear composition alongside a strong value structure. The rest was using gradations and fills to create temperature relations.

Before I start doing anything I like to find some reference online of the subject that I want to paint. Lately I've been experimenting with the idea of having some characters surfing in a massive desert. I wanted to keep expanding on that idea, So in this case I searched for huge desert landscapes, dunes and sand buggies. Also when I look for reference, I'm looking for all kinds of things like composition, color and value relations, character poses and topics. In this case I didn't stick to desert pictures to get inspiration for desert images.

01 **The block-In:** I have a clear vision in my head of the final image, A massive desert landscape with sand surfing vehicles is exactly what I want. Having that in mind, the first thing I'm doing here is laying down shapes that I eventually will be using as masks. I begin to block in my composition using a hard edge brush with the Opacity turned off, that way I can get a clear and sharp edge. At this point, it's easier to keep the image in grayscale. That way I'm only focusing on the readability of the shapes.

02 **Adding lights:** I have all the shapes in my image in separate layers. That way, once I have a composition that I like, I use clipping masks to paint my lights into those shapes. So, I create a new layer on top of every object in my composition and then I clip those layers to the main shapes. That means that whatever I paint on my new Clipping Mask layers is not going to outside the boundaries of the layer below it. I'm also using a texture brush with no opacity just to start adding some interesting strokes into the painting.

03 **The sky tone:** When it comes to adding color to a scene, I always prefer to
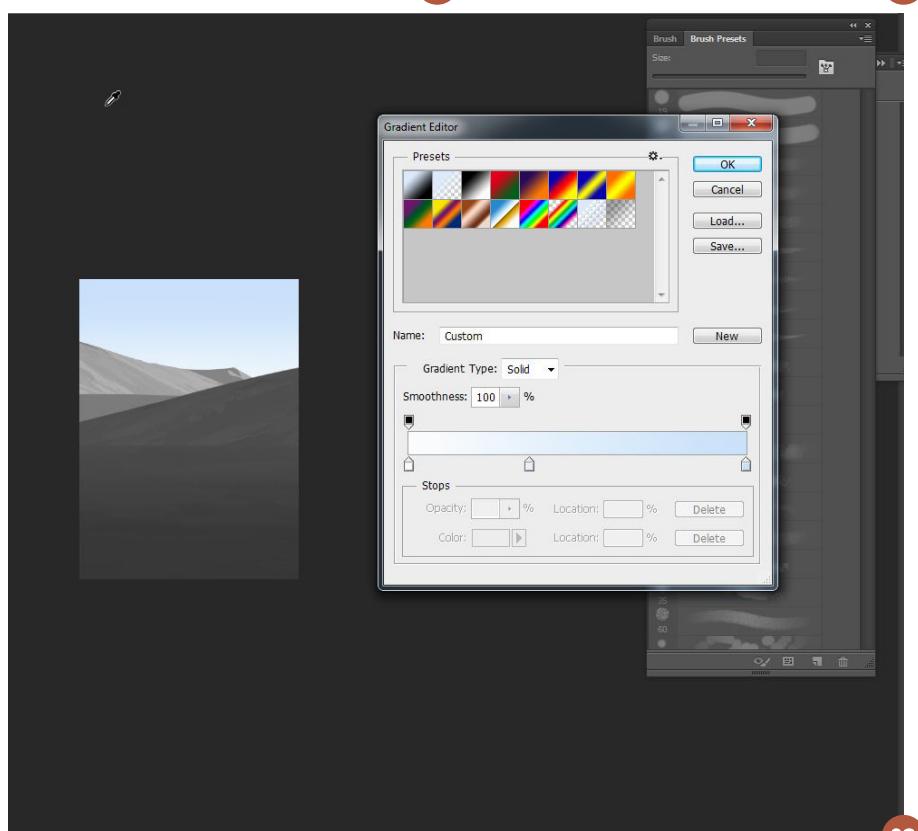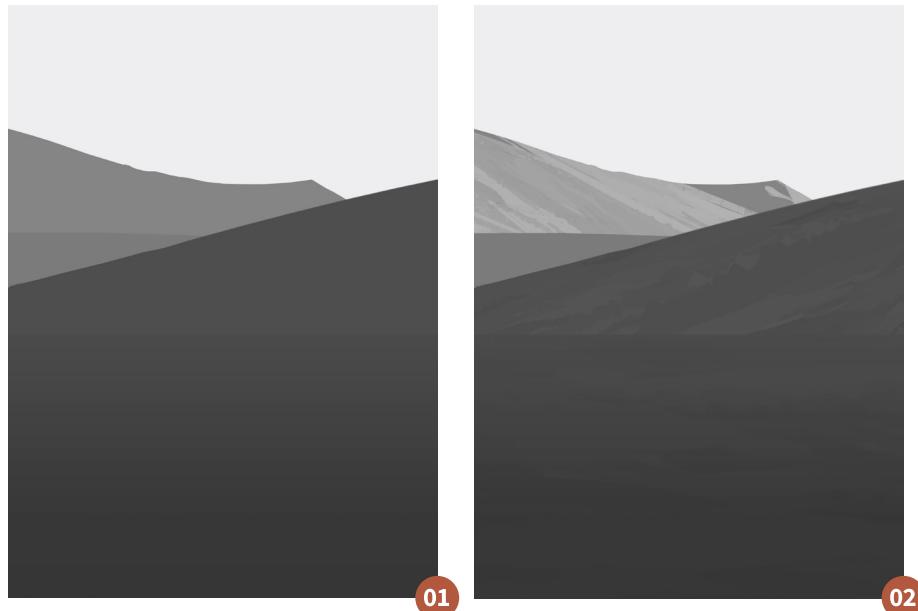
"To block in the sky I use the Gradient tool to lay down some tones in the back"

start with the sky. The sky is often one of the most evident values in a painting, making it easier to nail down. Most importantly though, the sky gives me enough information in terms of color temperature and time of the day to make the other colors in the painting easier to judge. To block in the sky, I use the Gradient tool to lay down some tones in the back. Going from a warmer tone at the bottom to a cooler, desaturated blue towards the top. ▶

01 The composition created using black and white shapes, trying to use a maximum of four values

02 Here are the added the lights into my scene using clipping mask layers

**03** Using the Gradient tool I lay down some initial tones for the sky

04 **Color:** Next, after using Clipping Mask layers for every element on my painting I apply some basic color to my scene. Since I have my sky tone already there, it's easier for me to throw paint into my shapes, compare it to the sky color and then adjust it if necessary. I have in mind a dawn kind of lighting, so I use the warm tones towards the back of my image. I make it obvious that you can still see some light reflecting on the dunes in the background, and also creating a nice relationship between those warms colors and the coolest tones in the foreground.

05 **Adding the highlights:** I then move to the highlights. For this I'm using the same method that I've been using for pretty much everything. I add a Clipping Mask on top of my initial light layer and start to paint the direct sun light. I use a standard hard edge brush to quickly add a warm salmon tone for the lights. This will create a solid base for me to then go back to that layer and add some details on top. Using a texture brush with the Color Dynamics turned on I paint some lighter details on the foreground dunes.

06 **Painting the details:** Once I have all my color information there, I can then start to add some detail. I'm always thinking big to small, and general to specific.

Since all the elements in my painting are on separate layers, I can just add more Clipping Mask layers and paint opaquely on top of my shapes. I feel that the color of my highlights needs some more variation, so with a texture brush I start to create some gradations coming from the left side. I also add some details in the foreground using the same method, I think this will help to give the image a more realistic read overall.

07 **Surfing vehicle:** The whole image needs to be a little bit more contrasted, so I add a curves layer on top of everything. Next, I paint the dune surfing vehicle. I want to create some nice contrast between the vehicle ▶

04 Using Clipping Mask layers I add some color into my shapes

05 I add some highlights onto my shapes using a Clipping Mask layer

06 I add some details using a texture brush into my existing Clipping Mask layers

07 I need some narrative elements in my scene, so I add the windsurfing vehicle
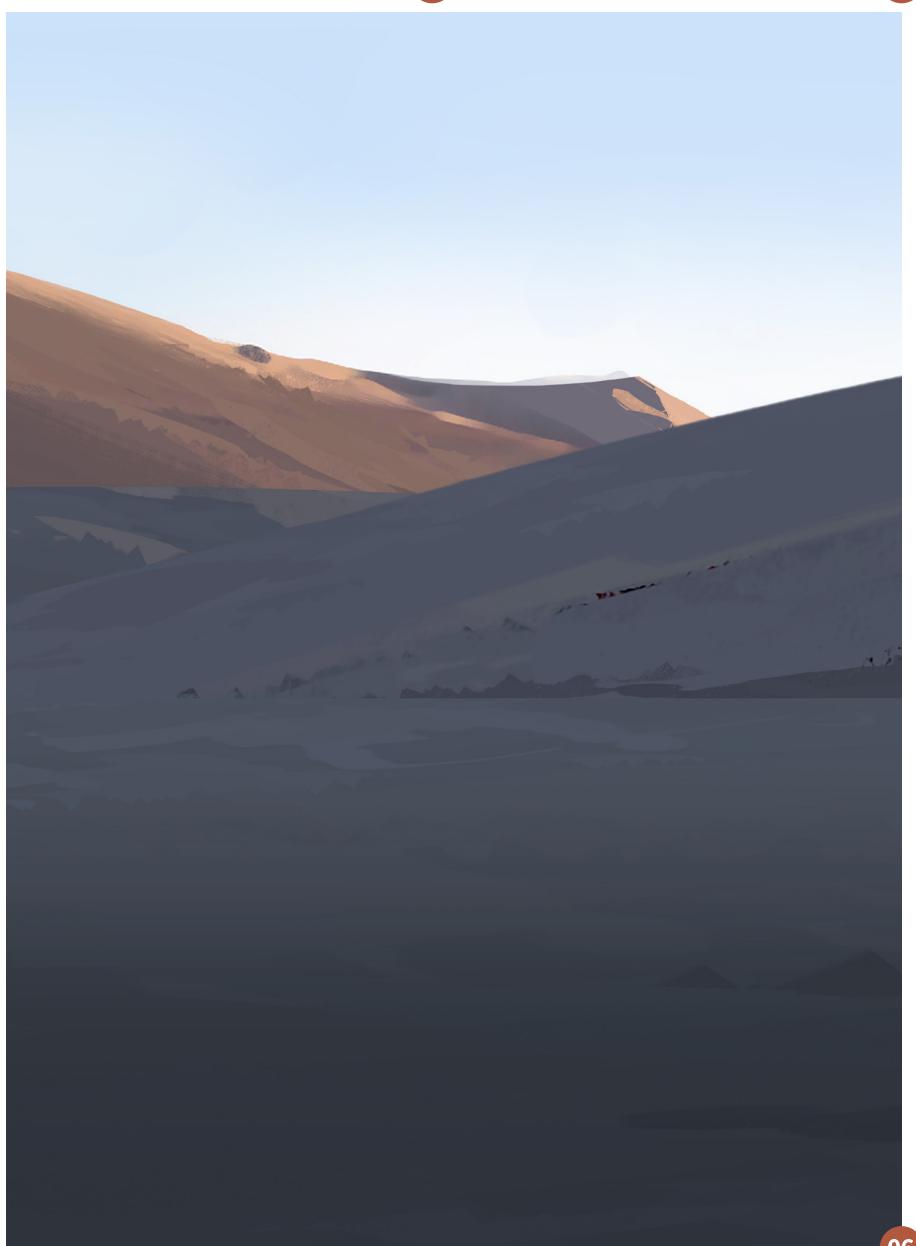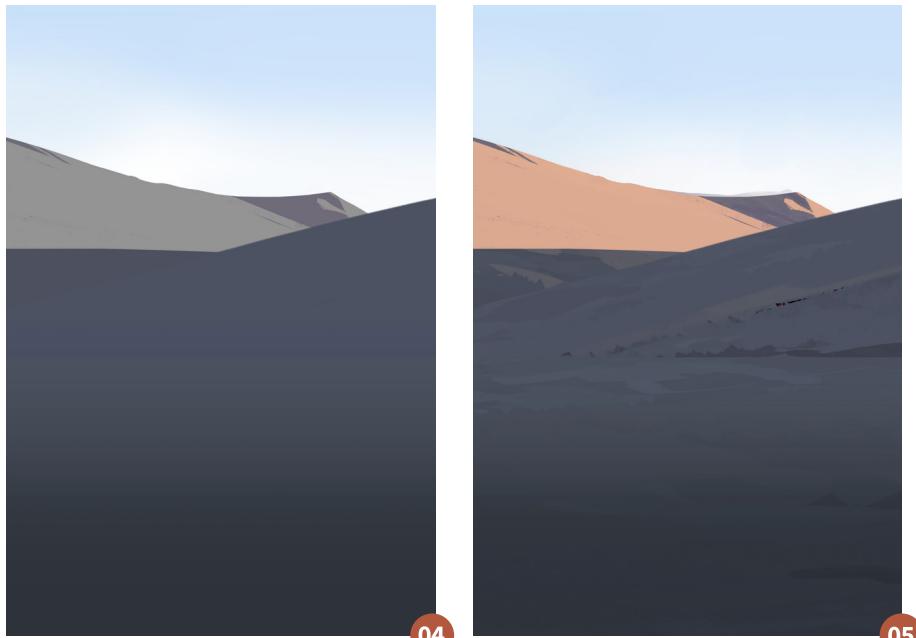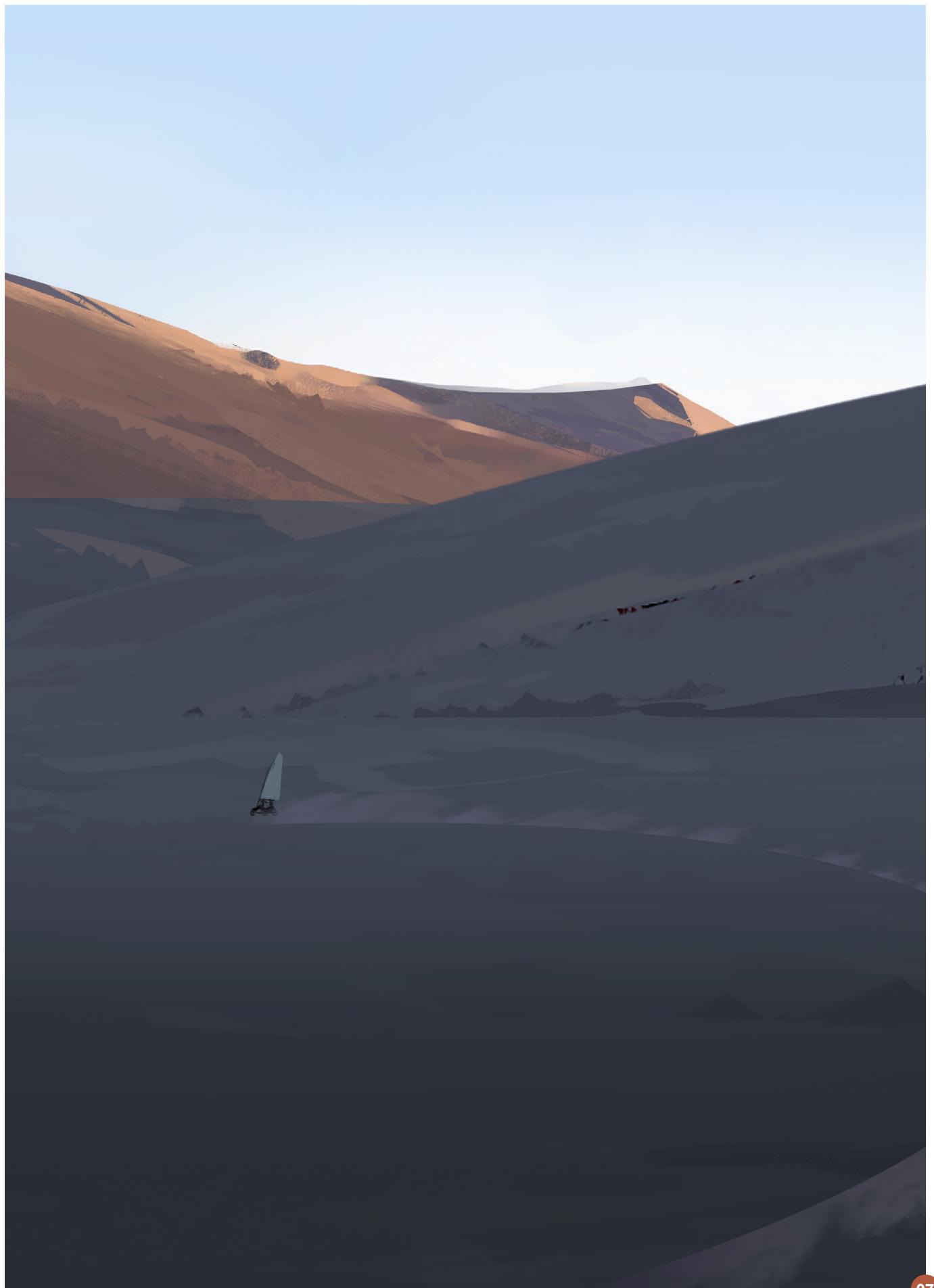
and the sand. So, I decide to add a sail with a lighter value, for this I create a black silhouette and then paint opaquely on top of it using a Clipping Mask layer. I still feel that there is something missing from the composition though, so using a Smoke brush, I paint a dust trail coming from the sail. Then, I use the Elliptical Marquee tool to cut a clean edge into the dust.

08 **Light FX:** I now need something to make my highlights more believable and dramatic. A trick that I like to use for creating bloom effects is to create a new layer on top of my painting, set it to Color Dodge, and paint the bloom of the sunlight with a warm orange tone using a standard Photoshop airbrush.

Color Dodge layers are extremely strong, so you have to be careful when selecting the colors. I like to use a darker value at first and then increase the value if I need to afterwards.

09 **Painting fog:** I feel like there should be more separation between the planes in the middle ground, so using a soft brush I carefully add a layer of fog just to help the ground plane to read a little bit better, and at the same time add scale and atmospheric perspective to the scene. Then, I lower the opacity of the fog layer to tone it down. Sometimes when you use lower opacity on some layers you can lose some saturation, so I always come back and add some more saturation using a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer later on.

10 **Final touches:** At this point, the image is basically done. This final step is something that I learned from my friend Shaddy Safadi. I'm going to create a Noise Texture layer to overlay on top of the image to give it a more photographic look. I do this by creating a new layer on top of everything and filling it with a 50% gray base. Then I go to Filter Gallery > Texture > Grain. Right after, I use that layer as an overlay at 10% opacity. I also soften some edges using the Smudge tool, just to have some variety and have some areas of visual rest in the scene. ●

Color Dodge layer

08

08 Using Color Dodge layers I add some bloom effects into my dunes

09 Using a soft airbrush I paint some fog in to get a better read of my shapes

10 I add some final touches to the image and call it done
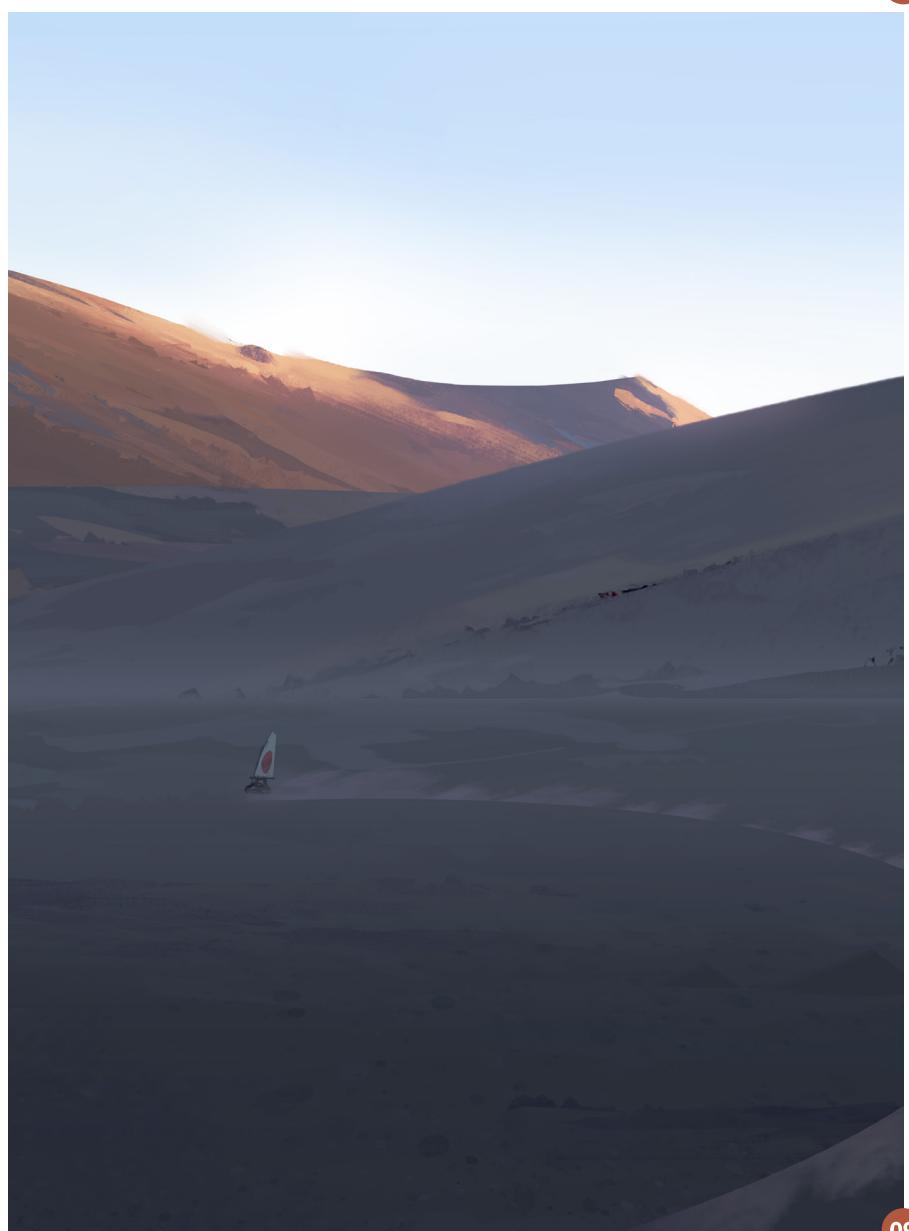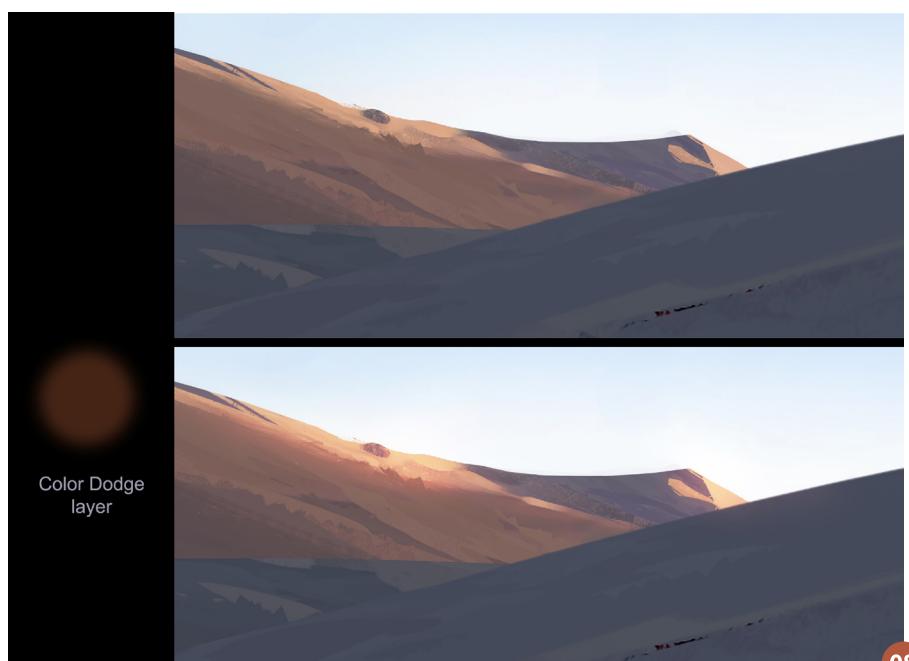
09

The Artist

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Experiment with brushes

Ferdinand D. Ladera shares the process of how his painting Monster Raid materialized, demonstrating how experimenting with brushes can result in new, unexpected ideas! ▶

The Artist

Ferdinand D. Ladera
ferdinandladera.com

Software Used:
Photoshop

Ferdinand Dumago Ladera
is a concept artist originally
from the Philippines.
After studying Fine Art at
FEATI University in Manila,
Philippines, Ferdinand now
currently works at Ladyluck
Digital Media as a concept
artist specializing in fantasy
and sci-fi illustration.

Follow Ferdinand's workflow to discover how to experiment with brushes to form ideas.

In this project overview I will show you the process of how my painting, *Monster Raid* came to be. Most of my paintings are not planned; I usually just paint what comes to mind as I play around with the brushes. Most of my scenes are landscape-based, but it will usually take me a while before I think of an interesting scene. I find landscapes calming as they give me a sense of peace while I create different sceneries that trigger different emotions, plus they're fun to make.

My greatest inspirations are classical artworks from great masters like Peter Paul Rubens. His dynamic composition and lighting inspires me. I applied that technique in my *Monster Raid* image and it only took a little time to establish my color and lighting schemes. I used Photoshop in this image as it has been my primary tool since I began digital painting.

01 **Inspiration and studies:** I'm very interested in landscape illustration, that's why most of my pieces are mountains, trees and rivers. I usually don't know what to paint or draw when I start on a piece, but with each stroke that I make, I create random shapes and experiment

and play with the different brushstrokes until some interesting forms appear.

Before I began those studies though, I looked up some landscape reference images. My favorite landscape to paint is Iceland, because of their fascinating and amazing unique land formations. I have lots of photo references on my computer and I also took my own photographs as well. I've traveled to a lot of different places here in my country just to take pictures of the landscape.

I say this because it is really important as an artist to explore your own world and to have a good visual library in your mind. You will speed up your

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process, be more productive and at the same time will enhance your artistic skills and produce high-quality original images.

> "I always start with grayscale so that I can read the values properly and so that I can see the distances between each element more clearly"

02 **The final idea:** Having gathered a series of sketches of the scene I wanted to create, I then combined all of the studies that I made to indicate the direction I wanted my art to go in.

I always start with grayscale so that I can read the values properly and so that I can see the distances between each element more clearly. Atmospheric perspective should be considered when creating landscape so that it looks more real when you view the whole scene.

I also used photo textures here so that it was easier for me to visualize the textures that I wanted to achieve. Then I just painted over the textures to make it look more like a painting.

03 **Main concept:** I didn't mean to put in a giant octopus – all I wanted was a fantasy landscape that had a dark feel to it. As I said earlier, I don't plan my paintings from the start, whatever comes to mind in that moment is what I include in the piece.

So it was a giant octopus creature that invaded my head while painting, and so that is what I

painted. I thought to myself; why not feature a giant creature? It would be something new that will stand out from most of my landscape paintings. So I just continued painting it and used it as my main concept.

Here I used the giant octopus as a test and it turned out well – the size pretty much worked in terms of the entire frame. You can see the three point perspective I used. Perspective is where you measure the right distances between each element and its relevant proportions – it's more important when making landscape environments.

04 **Adding a story:** While I was painting this scene, I was thinking that there could be a small peaceful town that would be attacked by a giant creature. So after adding the creature, I thought of adding some buildings or houses so it looked like the creature was about to destroy them. Here in this step, I put more details on the creature and added splash effects. ▶

01 Concept studies to capture the look and feel of the scene I want to create

02 Gathering all ideas into one clear image to begin painting

03 Creating a giant octopus added interest to the scene

04 Adding small buildings created a narrative

05 **Details:** Next, I drew in some more buildings on top of the rock formations and added some more details. The photo references you see here were taken from **www. freetextures.3dtotal.com**.

I also added ruined ships in the foreground to create more depth so that the scene would be more dramatic as a whole.

06 **Creating focus:** This part of the painting process was one of the hardest for me. I took my time detailing and compositing each of the elements to make the painting more beautiful and eye-catching.

You should detail the image so that the story is smooth and understood by all. You don't have to detail everything, what's important is the focus point, which for my painting is the octopus destroying the ships. The octopus is my main focal point and second is the buildings. To support this order, I lessened the building on the pointed mountain as it was a bit distracting.

07 **Composition:** You should also have a sharp eye for the composition. I included a variety in this image, and ensured that almost all the subjects were aligned. In this image here, you'll see:

1. The Rule of Thirds – placing the main subject (the octopus) in the thirds.

2. Root 4 Rectangle – the basic armature. The dynamic symmetry of a rectangle, two diagonals, four reciprocals and vertical/horizontal lines dropped the four intersections. The subjects are aligned to the lines of the composition.

3. Ellipses – Arcs and ellipses can be used to unite subjects or objects in the image. Here, you can see that the subjects and the mountains follow the curved or circle lines. It moves from the small circle to the biggest

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Rule of Thirds

Ellipses
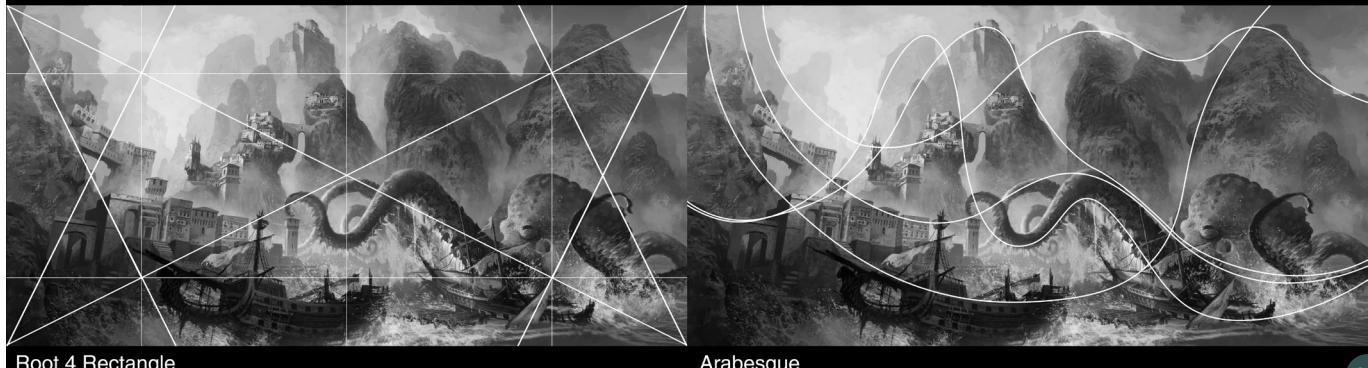
Root 4 Rectangle

Arabesque

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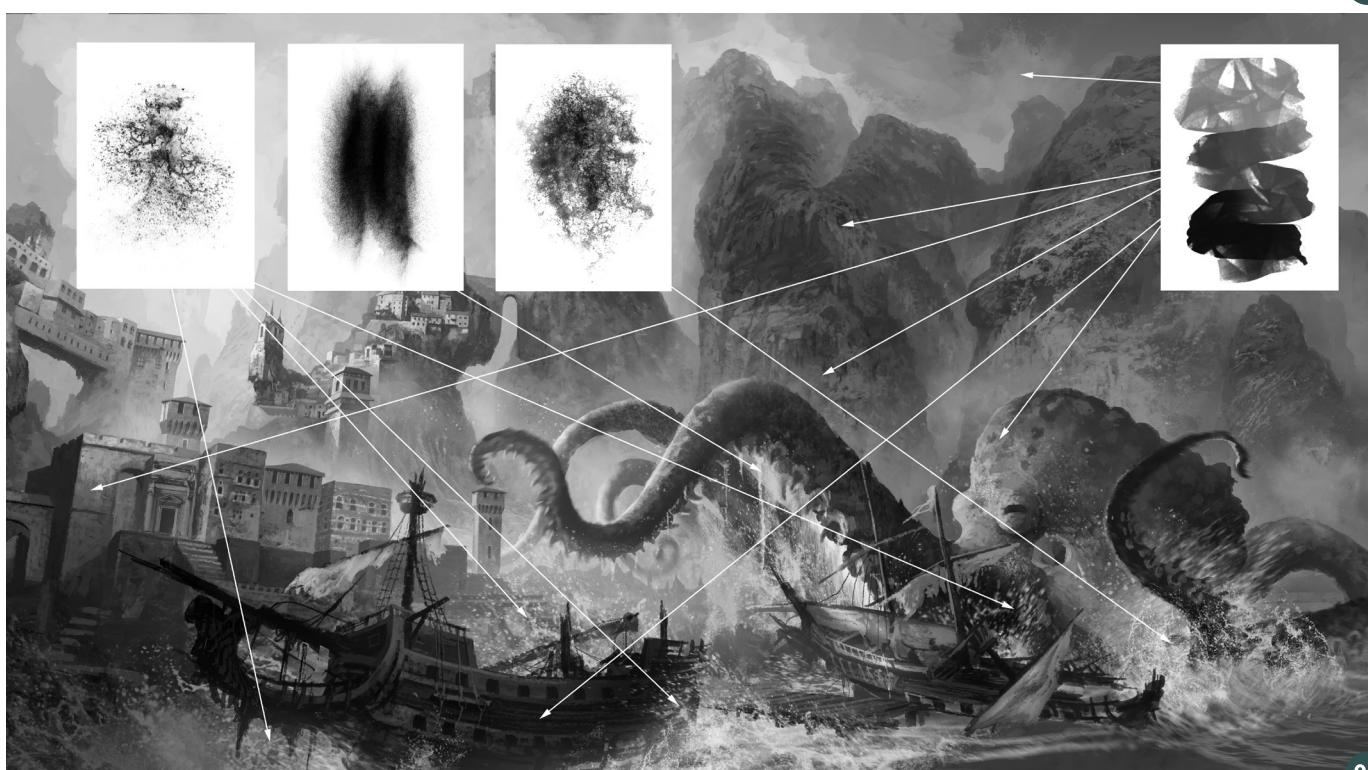
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so the composition of the subjects move from big to small. This is a good way to compose a painting as it makes you look at the main subject and leads your eyes to the other objects in the painting.

4. Arabesque – a curvilinear element that leads the eye through the image. I also applied this to the painting, as you'll notice – the flows of the lines are align with the objects.

08 **Brushes:** These are the brushes I used. All these were downloaded from the internet thanks to those artists who shared these brushes for free. I just changed the settings of the brushes to my liking. ▶

05 Adding more details using photo references

06 Putting more detail on the ships and adding more buildings

07 A variety of composition rules followed in the creation of this piece

08 Some of the brush textures used in the piece

09 **Color:** I enjoyed this part of the painting process the most. The process was simple and quick to do but it delivered amazing results. Before, coloring was a tedious part of the process because I color by objects in different layers. Adjusting the ambience or contrast of the scene was such a hassle because I had to merge layers for it to take effect. Now that I've learned to use curves in separate layers without flattening them, coloring has become a much easier step.

Here, I used curves in the layer mode and adjusted the red, green and blue channels until I got the mood that I wanted. If I wasn't satisfied at that stage, I could just keep repeating the process until I got the colors that I wanted.

10 **Light:** In this scene, I wanted some light to come from somewhere on the left and shine on the octopus diagonally, so I added some yellow-orange on a separate layer in Multiply mode.

Then I applied Color Dodge (brush setting mode) on a separate flattened layer using a Soft Round brush so that it would create a contrast with the rays of the sun.

11 **More color adjustments:** Here, I adjusted the color again using curves. The procedure to this is the same as the procedure using the channels earlier – just be sure you do this in separate layer. I also adjusted the contrast using Levels, and then I added a little more detail on the top such as the clouds and birds. These were all done using custom brushes.

12 **The final image:** This is the final image: I flipped the canvas and I did a little bit more adjusting using the Color Balance function until I was satisfied with the colors. I wanted it to resemble a classical painting.

I learned these processes on my own through experimentation and studying famous artists. You can copy the processes I used here, but I think all of us have our own interpretation when making masterpieces. I've shared my art creation process here just to help you with your own images, or to merely inspire new concepts. Until next time! ●

Adding a yellow-orange light to the scene on a separate layer
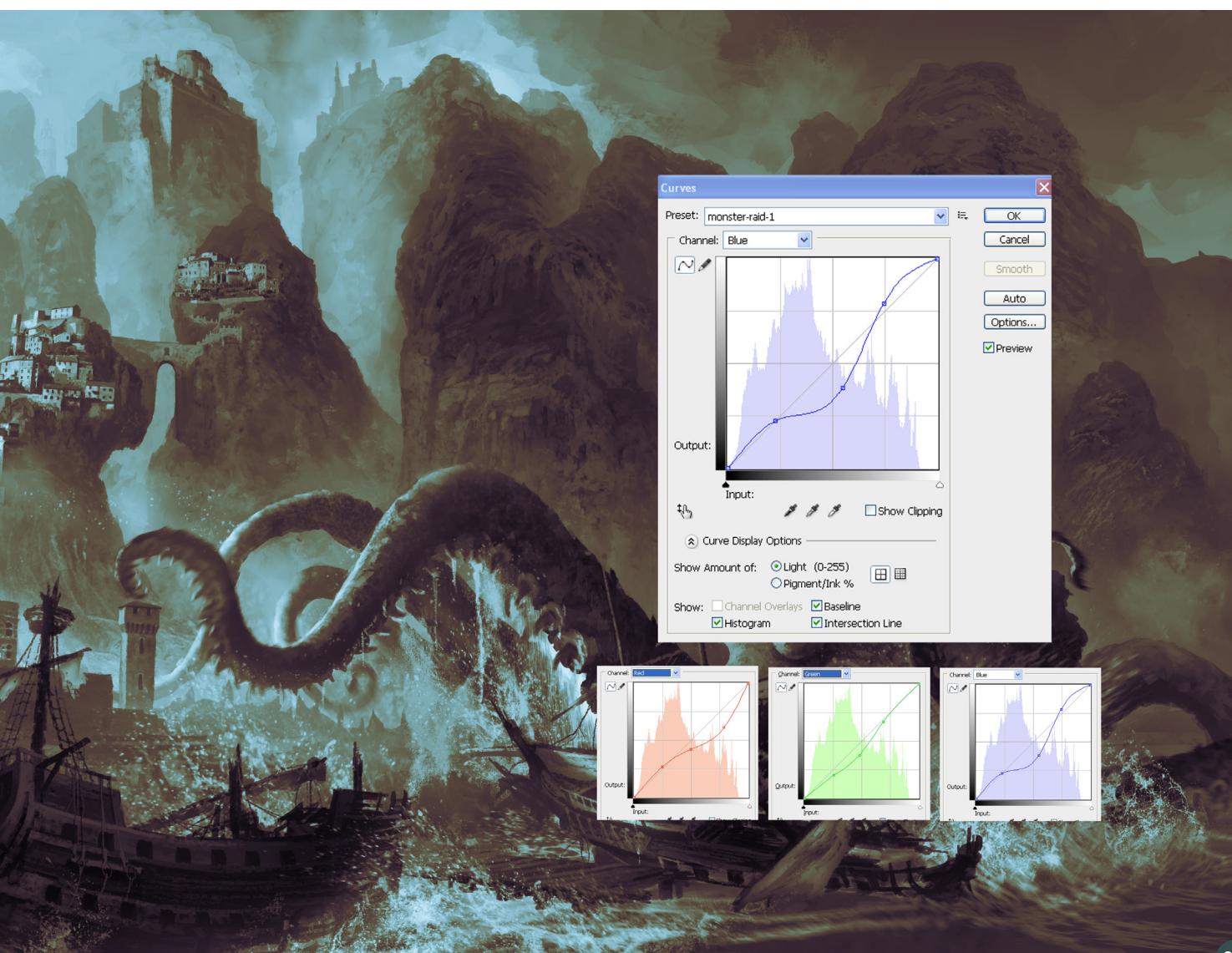
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Tweaking the overall color tones using curves

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The Artist

Michal Lisowski
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Software Used:
Photoshop

Bio:
Michal Lisowski is a digital
painter living in Warsaw,
Poland. Michal has
experience in working for
advertising, games and
feature films as a concept
artist and illustrator.

DIGITAL ART MASTER:
Customer
by Michal Lisowski

Michal Lisowski shares useful tips for creating solid compositions with atmosphere
as he reveals how he created his image *Customer*. ▶

Big cities have their secrets; dark places that become crime scenes. This work shows part of this underworld where prostitutes wait under a bridge for clients. One of the girls gets into a car, and in the background normal life goes on.

Composition

In my opinion, the best way to achieve good composition and correct perspective in a cityscape is to use 3D elements. I built and

arranged a few boxes, placing low buildings in the foreground and the tallest in the background to add depth and create visual interest. I placed the camera between these and played with it, looking for an interesting shot (**Fig.01**).

The boxes weren't very detailed, but what was important at this stage was to try to find at least two or three shots so that I could choose the best one. Robh Ruppel claims that "the real art comes

from the choices you make, not the technique", so I try to give myself the opportunity to paint the best picture I can.

This decision-making process is a key part of working effectively. If you have created a detailed, finished piece but realize that the composition isn't right, or that your story is unreadable, the only thing you will be able to do is save the image in your "Unfinished" folder.
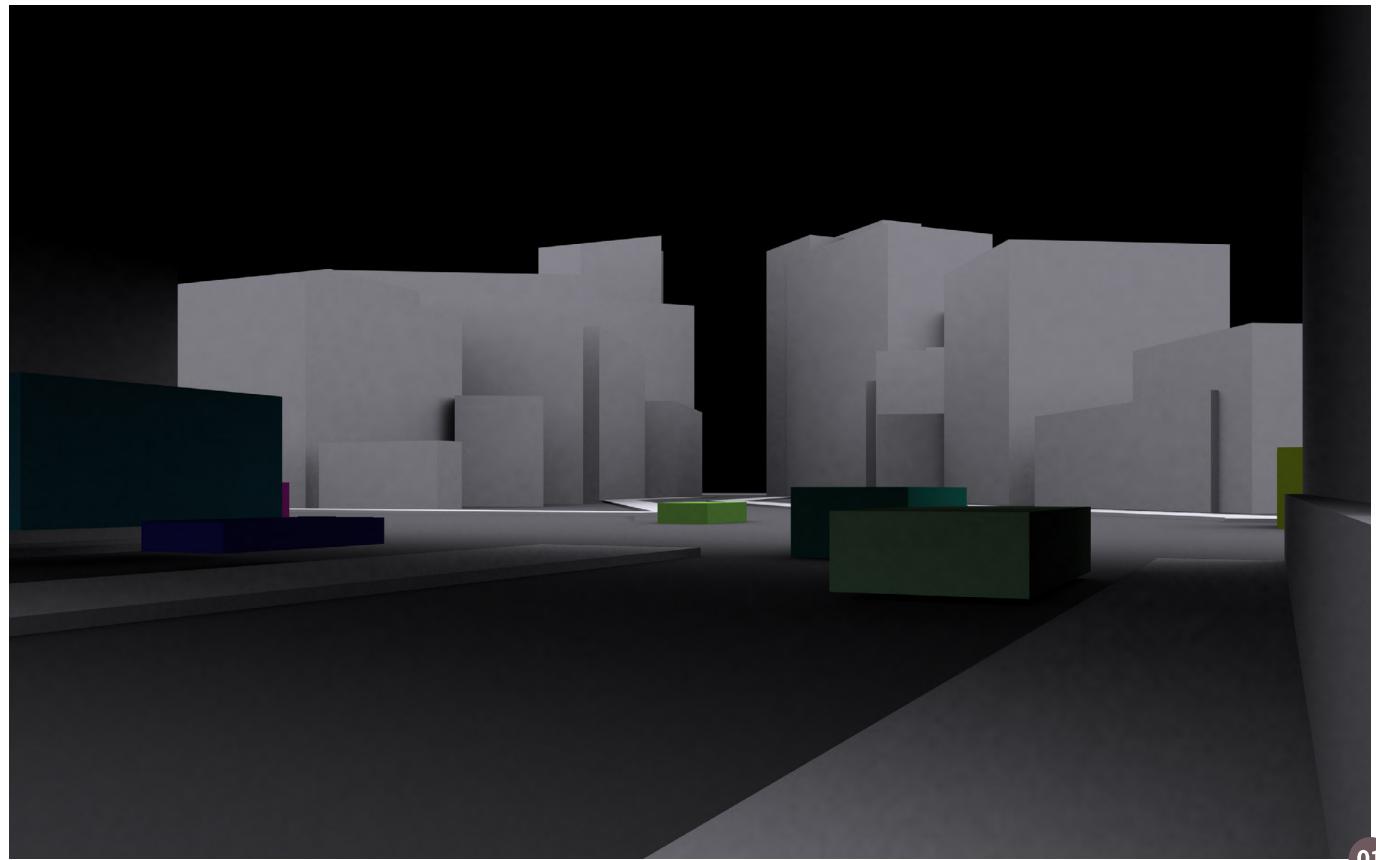
Color and detail

Once I had my 3D clay render and had picked my favorite shot, it was the time to paint it in Photoshop. I chose a color palette of brown, pink, purple, violet, blue, cyan and green (**Fig.02**).

I decided to separate the background by using a different range of values. I wanted to create the impression of looking out from a dark cave. To establish this effect, I used a lot of dark colors in the foreground, but had I used colors with a similar value range in the background then the readability of the whole picture would have been unbalanced, allowing the eyes to wander.

I decided on a right-hand light source to create a shadow play and help emphasize the contrast between the silhouettes in the middle of the tunnel and those in the background. This effectively created some kind of focal point.

Once I had an idea of where I was heading with the composition and color, it was time to add detail to the building facades (**Fig.03**). I used hard, mostly square-shaped brushes and a few textures. As I said, it wasn't important to paint every brick on the buildings.

During this process I also tried to enrich the color palette. Some artists find it hard to introduce new

colors when working with a desaturated palette, but I recommend courage when experimenting with color. It is much easier to break down the color when you already have a rich palette on your canvas.

In order to bring the city to life I started to paint in details such as cars, lamps, cables, billboards, neon signs and people walking on the street (**Fig.04**). In my opinion, details aren't what make the painting, but are important when it comes to polishing and finalizing a solid foundation.

There is still time at this stage to make changes to enrich the story and the artistic value of the ▶

scene, but if I feel the image isn't looking right, I have to resist the draw of the Delete key.

I took some time to assess my work and see what I could add or change to improve the image. I wanted to create the affect of rush hour, whilst avoiding the impression that the scene is set downtown. I also added another girl in the tunnel, as I decided that a group would communicate the story more effectively (**Fig.05**).

Final touches
Once I was happy with the composition and confident that the image was working, there was

nothing left to do but finish the detailing and add some final touches (**Fig.06 and 07**). I find this stage to be quite relaxing.

Whilst refining the picture by adding details, it is important to work across the whole composition and insure that you don't accidentally create new focal points through unnecessary concentration on specific details.

Finally, I flipped the canvas horizontally to check that everything was fine and after that, the only thing remaining was to sign the work.

I hope this tutorial has helped you to understand the importance of the early stages of the painting process and how important it is to have control over the whole composition. Do not ignore the importance of composition and do not accept poor design by concealing it with detail. ●

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The Artist

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